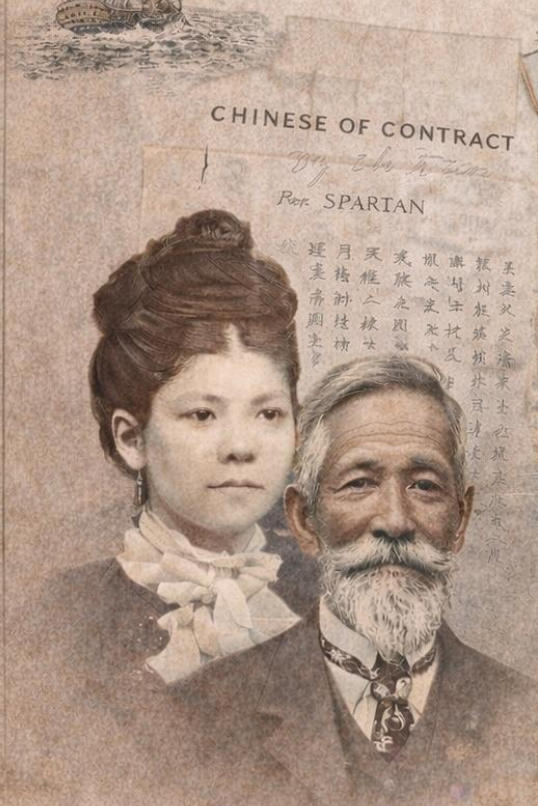
Too much like Englishmen

Amoy Migrants in Australia

不屈從認命的廈門仔



By Michael Williams

Michael Williams

Too much like Englishmen

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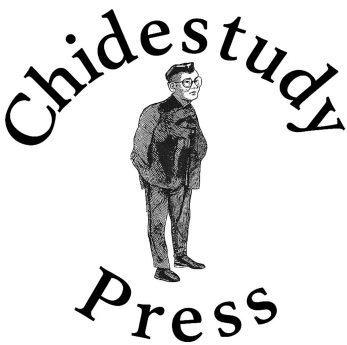

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Too much like Englishmen

Amoy Migrants in Australia

不屈從認命的廈門仔

By

Michael Williams

They are not the people we require. Too much like Englishmen in their wants and intelligence, they are yet too dissimilar in their nature, habits, and language, ever to combine successfully with our own population.

Moreton Bay Free Press, Tuesday 30 November 1852, p.1.

Image 1: *Amoy shipping 1853*

Title Page

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Too much like Englishmen: Amoy Migrants in Australia 不屈從認命的廈門仔

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Preface

Chinese migration to Australia is typically remembered as beginning with the arrival of thousands of men from "Canton" during the goldrush era of the mid-1850s and after. Yet an earlier and overlooked movement brought over 3,000 men on five year contracts from Fujian, through the port of Amoy (Xiamen/廈門), between 1848 and 1853. This migration emerged from pre-existing networks of Southeast Asian labour traffic, enabled among other things by Amoy's status as a treaty port after the First Opium War. Administered by both British and Chinese agents, their contracts promised wages and rations for fixed terms, but deception and coercion were widespread. The project, as far as the Colony of NSW was concerned, ended with public unrest and riots in Amoy in 1852. Before this occurred, around twenty-five voyages transported men to New South Wales, with high mortality reported on several passages.

In the Colony of New South Wales, most of these men were employed as shepherds on isolated pastoral stations, where their presence both stimulated reliance and triggered resentment. Archival sources reveal wage disputes, absconding, assaults, and court cases that did much to shape colonial Australian attitudes toward Chinese labour and people. With the onset of the goldrushes in 1853–54 and the migration of Cantonese miners in their tens of thousands, the Fujian shepherd migration was rapidly overshadowed. Some Amoy men transitioned into mining or small businesses, while others remained in rural work, and others ended their lives in poverty and institutions. Many became the ancestors of generations of Australians today.

The Amoy migration highlights the colonial search for cheap labour after the decline of convict transportation, the politics of race and class in the mid-nineteenth century Australian colonies, and the enduring bias of archival sources that privileges conflict over ordinary experience. Despite its marginalisation in historical memory, this migration made a significant but largely unacknowledged contribution to the expansion of Australia's pastoral frontier. In particularising this history, it has been important to avoid emphasising victimisation over agency.

More importantly, increasing investigations by family historians are revealing the intimate and familial contribution made to Australia over the generations. To this end a series of vignettes (short biographies) of individual Amoy men and/or their families are scattered throughout the text in no particular order to bring to life the individuals of this general history. Finally, a major aim has been to provide the descendants of these Amoy men and the wider Australian community with a clearer insight into this brief yet not insignificant phase of our history.

Note: Historical terms such as 'Chinaman' are retained in quotes and specific contexts to reflect the language and attitudes of the 19th-century records.

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1

1. A restless and refractory disposition

– Amoy men in colonial Australia

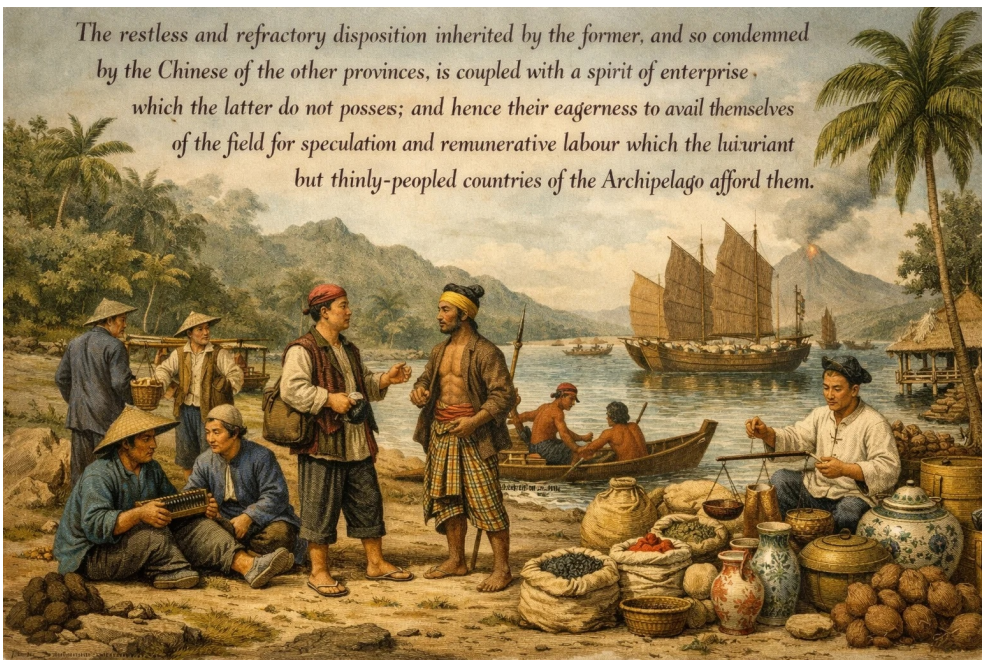

The restless and refractory disposition inherited by the former, and so condemned
by the Chinese of the other provinces, is coupled with a spirit of enterprise,
which the latter do not posses; and hence their eagerness to avail themselves
of the field for speculation and remunerative labour which the luxuriant
but thinly-peopled countries of the Archipelago afford them.

***Image 2:** The people of southern China*

Chinese migration to Australia is usually seen to have begun with goldrush arrivals from Canton. However, arrival of over 3,000 men from the province of Fujian (福建)—particularly from its port of Amoy (Xiamen)—between 1848 and 1853 is all too often reduced to a footnote at best.[1] Recruited largely as indentured shepherds, they came before the rush to the goldfields, and their experience represents a distinct phase of Chinese Australian history that has seldom been fully explored. Avoiding the myths that have clouded this story, this study seeks to commemorate their real contributions, often embedded in family legacies, that continue into present-day Australia.

If people know anything about Chinese Australian history, they likely associate it with the 19th-century gold rushes, market gardening, anti-Chinese riots, and the infamous fake Dictation Test of Australia's 20th-century Immigration Restriction Act.[2] Yet this narrow framing, focused almost entirely on people from the Pearl River Delta of the province of Guangdong (廣東, aka

Canton), leaves important gaps. This narrow view overlooks contributions ranging from opera companies to village networks and major international business enterprises. Even more overlooked are the migrants from Fujian, who although prominent in the Chinese diaspora to Southeast Asia, also made their way to the Colony of New South Wales in the late 1840s and early 1850s.[3] Their numbers were small compared with later Cantonese arrivals, but their story sheds much light on labour migration, settlement, and the diversity of Chinese experience in colonial Australia.

Like Guangdong, the more northerly province of Fujian (still considered southern China), has a long history of labour migration to Southeast Asia. Given this background it is unsurprising that workers and later gold seekers from these provinces made their way to the British colonies then developing on the Australian continent to the south. What is remarkable, however, is that unlike their Cantonese neighbours, migrants from Fujian did not maintain lasting ties with Australia. As a result, their presence has been largely reduced to a footnote in Australian history—if even that. While in Fujian's own diaspora history, they receive even less recognition, overshadowed by the far greater numbers of Fujian people who migrated to Southeast Asia and sustained generational connections there.

It is not intended to make the all-too-common claim that this is a "hidden history", the uncovering of which would fundamentally reshape existing narratives. The history of these men from Fujian remains nevertheless a field that has not been as thoroughly researched as it could be. Although much valuable scholarship has been undertaken, significant gaps persist.[4] This work aims to provide a comprehensive overview, including some previously unused sources. These are sources that include the results of a field trip to the point of origin – Xiamen (Amoy, 廈門), and more significantly, contributions by descendants of the Amoy men living in Australia today.

In the first half of the 19th century, Amoy was a favoured port for European traders, although Quanzhou (泉州), to the north, was the largest port in Fujian province. Both ports served as departure points for many seeking work overseas, increasingly on European ships by the 1840s, and under a range of conditions. The position of the foreign merchants at Amoy was formalized by the Treaty of Nanjing, which ended the First Opium War (1839-1842). This made Amoy one of five treaty ports open to European trade and labour recruitment, particularly by the British. While the British colony of New South Wales had previously imported small numbers of labourers from China, the treaty, along with changes in local laws, paved the way for the large-scale importation of workers under contract.[5]

Though the exact conditions under which these workers were recruited remains disputed, it is certain that more than 3,000 men came to NSW from Amoy between 1848 and 1853. Agents brought them in, again under varying circumstances, and they were distributed among employers in the colony to work as shepherds and in other roles. Reactions to their arrival varied: some saw them as essential labour, while others condemned them as a threat to local wages and working conditions. The treatment of these workers also varied, sparking resistance and numerous court cases. There were reports of poor treatment, as well as conflicts between the workers themselves, as evidenced by yet more legal disputes.

This complex history raises important questions about language, identity, and integration. These are issues further complicated by the quickly succeeding arrival of larger numbers of gold seekers from the neighbouring province of Guangdong. Once their contracts expired, many of the Amoy men remained in the same occupations, others joined the gold rush or moved onto new occupations. Despite hostility, many adapted well to the local society. While the exact number of

those who returned to Fujian remains uncertain, many of those who stayed married, became naturalized, and left descendants in Australian society today.[6]

Although research has shed some light on these individuals and families, many details of the general history remain unclear, leading to misunderstandings and myths that persist to this day. The uncertainty surrounding this history has endured since their first arrival, despite clear contemporary accounts such as:

> *EMIGRATION from this province and the adjoining one of Fuhkeen dates from a very early period, and it is these two provinces alone that have sent forth the myriads which have reclaimed the islands of Formosa and Haenan, introduced industry and various of the most useful arts into the countries of Cochin China, Camboja, and Siam, settled many of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, and contributed more than any other race to the rise and prosperity of the European settlements in Java, the Philippines, and the Malayan Peninsula.*
>
> *Reasons for its being confined, to these two provinces.*
>
> *Various circumstances, among the most obvious of which are the redundant population and the poverty of the districts from whence this emigration has chiefly proceeded, have contributed to this result. But as several provinces of China are more densely peopled than either Kwangtung or Fuhkeen, (portions of which remain uncleared at the present day), and yet find means to support their population, it is evident that this tide of emigration is partly attributable to other causes than those quoted. It is to be accounted for by the different character of the southern Chinese to that of their countrymen of the centre and north. The restless and refractory disposition inherited by the former, and so condemned by the Chinese of the other provinces, is coupled with a spirit of enterprise which the latter do not possess ; and hence their eagerness to avail themselves of the field for speculation and remunerative labour which the luxuriant but thinly-peopled countries of the Archipelago afford them.*[7]

Contemporary observers such as Harry Parkes explained this migration in terms of the "restless and refractory disposition" of the southern Chinese, a phrase that reflected both prejudice and recognition of entrepreneurial spirit. Such accounts, while shaped by colonial attitudes, nonetheless highlight why the migration of the Amoy men should not be treated solely in terms of victimhood. The agency and determination of some, if not all, of the Amoy men needs to be part of the story if this still little understood portion of Australian history is to be fully incorporated into the Australian story.

The chapters that follow will explain several factors essential to understanding the history of the Amoy men in Australia. These include why the port of Amoy is the focus of this study; an outline of the migration as a form of labour trade; an examination of the conditions under which this migration occurred; and a consideration of how these workers were received in the Colony of New South Wales. Along the way, the lives of selected individuals will be highlighted to remind us that the label "Amoy men" refers to real people whose experiences, so often lost to history, deserve recognition. The study concludes by examining the legacy of these men from Amoy—both the myths that have grown up around them and, more importantly, the family histories that continue to shape the lives of many Australians today.

2

Vignette I - Thomas Danswan

Thomas Danswan's daughter Matilda who married John Davison in 1906

Thomas Danswan was aged around 24 when he arrived on the *Eleanor Lancaster* in 1852 and was recruited by the Australian Agricultural Company, working at Warrah, an AACo property near Quirindi, NSW.[8]

Thomas first applied for naturalization in 1863, but his application was rejected, as the Colony of NSW was refusing applications for naturalization from people born in China at that time. Nevertheless, he appears to have been prospering and in 1863 placed a reward for £5 for the return of a horse, signing himself as "Tommy Danswan, Chinaman, Warrah".[9]

The following year Thomas married Sarah Gimbert of Murrurundi and stated on the certificate that his father had been a shopkeeper named Pot Swee Te and his mother was called Lea Sun (or Tea Sun). Together they had 10 children.

Legal changes allowed him to again apply, this time successfully, to be naturalized in 1876. Thomas describes himself in this application as a farmer. Not long after this Thomas Danswan died of what was described as "malignant disease (cancer) of the liver and stomach" at age 54.[10]

2. From Treaty Port to Sheep Station

— Why Amoy? Why NSW?

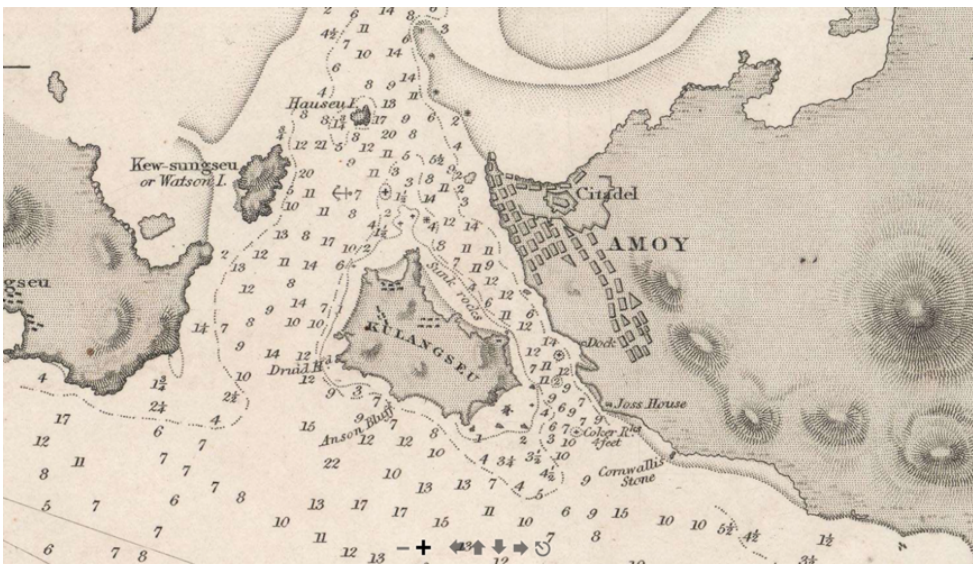


Image 3: *Map of Amoy Port, 1843*

The island of Amoy extends about twelve miles in length and ten in breadth. It contains one hundred and thirty-six villages and hamlets; the population of the whole island amounting to about 400,000.[11]

Opposite Koo-Lung-Soo, was the city of Amoy, conspicuous for its forests of tall masts; hundreds on hundreds of huge junks crowded the harbour, resplendent in bright colours and waving flags, standards and pendants.

Amoy is probably the greatest mart in China for commerce carried on in native craft. There are junks from Singapore, from Borneo, Japan, Formosa, and all the Indian Archipelago, bringing valuable cargoes of spices, dye-woods, ivory, and a thousand other articles of foreign produce, in exchange for the indigenous productions of the country. [12]

Amoy Island / 廈門島

Amoy, an island close to the Chinese mainland, emerged as a major treaty port after the First Opium War and the Treaty of Nanjing that concluded it. Under British supervision it quickly became a hub for labour migration. Its long-standing connections with Southeast Asian labour networks made it a logical and convenient source for recruiting men, linking local traditions of migration with the new global demands for indentured labour. These demands included the expansion of the wool industry in the Colony of NSW as its cheap labour supply in convicts was drying up.

The first question to consider is why Amoy? As a Sydney newspaper reported at the time of the First Opium War:

> *Amoy is one of the most ancient emporiums of China, and has been famous through all the dynasties for its great trade. The harbour is indeed excellent, and the junks can lie close to the warehouses, and unload their cargoes.*[13]

In the early 19th century, Amoy was the primary port for foreign traders along the Fujian coast. Hong Kong—established only in the 1840s—had yet to develop into a major hub. Amoy served as a key departure point for those migrating to various destinations in Southeast Asia, including Java, Singapore, and the Philippines. Alongside Quanzhou, Amoy played a role for Fujian similar to that of Canton (Guangzhou, 廣州) for the province of Guangdong before Hong Kong emerged as a dominant trading centre and embarkation point.[14]

Migration for work

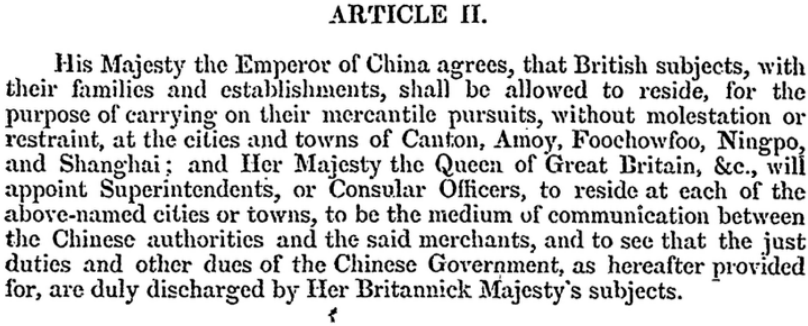
Trade was not the only reason people from Fujian migrated to Southeast Asia. Like their southern neighbours in Guangdong, they had a long history of labour migration. These journeys occurred under a variety of circumstances, including contractual agreements, coercion through kidnapping or debt, and of course voluntary relocation. With the arrival of European traders, they too became involved in the recruitment and transportation of these workers. As described by a member of the British consulate on Amoy:

The emigration of Chinese from the port of Amoy is of two kinds, which may be termed native and foreign contract emigration. The former is partly voluntary, as when the parties leave to join prosperous friends ... It is partly conducted by contract; supercargoes ... publish in their own family and neighbouring villages their readiness to provide passages for a certain number of hands. The agreement usually is ... free passage [for] the services of the emigrant for a year.[15]

***Image 4:** Attack on Amoy, 1841*

Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking)[16]

This existing pattern of migration was not entirely transformed by the First Opium War (1839–1842) but was significantly intensified by it. During the war, the British attacked and occupied the island of Amoy. However, unlike Hong Kong—where their occupation became permanent—Amoy was eventually returned to nominal Chinese control. The Treaty of Nanjing, which ended the conflict, designated Amoy as one of five so-called Treaty Ports, allowing foreigners to reside and trade there legally without interference from local authorities. As might be expected of a government recently defeated in war, local officials of the Qing Emperor treated all foreigners, their Chinese servants, and the British consulate officials in particular, with great care.



ARTICLE II.

His Majesty the Emperor of China agrees, that British subjects, with their families and establishments, shall be allowed to reside, for the purpose of carrying on their mercantile pursuits, without molestation or restraint, at the cities and towns of Canton, Amoy, Foochowfoo, Ningpo, and Shanghai; and Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, &c., will appoint Superintendents, or Consular Officers, to reside at each of the above-named cities or towns, to be the medium of communication between the Chinese authorities and the said merchants, and to see that the just duties and other dues of the Chinese Government, as hereafter provided for, are duly discharged by Her Britannick Majesty's subjects.

Image 5: Paragraph establishing the Treaty Ports

What this Treaty Port status meant was that the number of British and American trading houses increased, while the emigrant trade began to be carried on European shipping and to expand beyond the traditional South East Asia. Traditional junks continued to operate the traditional routes, but European ships being able to sail in more adverse winds had an advantage. According to Winchester, the first Europeans to recruit workers directly from Amoy were the French in 1845 —they had previously recruited from the Straits Settlements.[17] This change also made the recruitment of such labourers to travel to the Colony of NSW, among other European dominated destinations, a relatively simple new step. By 1852 workers were being carried to various destinations by European ships, with nearly half going to Australia.[18]

The British Colony of New South Wales

Since 1789, the British had established a colony on the Australian continent, centered on what would become Sydney and encompassing regions that later became the independent colonies of Victoria and Queensland. By the time of the First Opium War, New South Wales had transitioned from a penal colony to a free settler and local-born society, where opposition to the continued use of convicts was growing. The importation of workers from Amoy after 1847 is often seen as coinciding with the end of convict transportation, and while there is some correlation, the search for alternative sources of cheap labour had begun much earlier. As early as the 1830s in fact efforts were underway to secure labourers beyond convicts or paying higher wages to local workers. Initially, these efforts brought in only low numbers of workers, and it was not until the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, along with changes in local laws, that large-scale importation of contract labourers became feasible.

A small number of people from China had arrived to work in NSW from at least the 1820s, as well as a group of carpenters to Tasmania in 1830.[19] The newspaper report of these contracted (three years) Chinese carpenters is interesting. It clearly illustrates the issue around which the question of labour revolved, and would continue to revolve, until the present day. The issue being of course the question of which is better: cheaper goods or higher wages? A question answered by the *Launceston Advertiser* on the one side as, "however displeasing such falls in price may prove to a few, it will prove of great benefit to the many".[20] This answer of course was one very much determined by class and wealth. For what became the labour movement in Australia, this was a response also very much mixed with race. Chinese people as workers would play a prominent role in Australian politics for the next 100 years or more.[21] Many seemed happy to employ the

"Chinese mechanics" who arrived in Tasmania and more were proposed. Nevertheless, they appear to have been a one-off arrival and these Tasmanian Chinese carpenters have left little mark on history.[22]

These early 19th century "Chinese" arrivals are not easily identified, though it is almost certain they came from either Guangdong or Fujian provinces of the Qing Empire.[23] If not directly, they may have come via Singapore or perhaps even Shanghai, though it should be noted not via Hong Kong until later.[24] In fact, the first known persons to have been recruited to the Colony of NSW were via Hong Kong—"three Chinamen" in 1846 for their skill in harvesting "*beche la mer*" or sea cucumber.[25] Apart from these, the first substantial arrivals of Chinese people in the Colony of NSW are usually considered to be those who came as indentured or contract labourers through the Treaty Port of Amoy at the end of 1847.

As the convict system waned in the early 1840s, squatters and others searched for alternative sources of cheap labour. Especially for those willing to look after sheep in the large, lonely and then wholly unfenced pastures. These sheep owners looked for workers from India and China, both made available by the power of European colonialism, and in the case of China by the provisions imposed in the Treaty of Nanjing. Thus, both Indian and Chinese "coolies" were brought to the Colony of NSW.[26]

CHINESE
Mechanics and Labourers.

***Image 6:** Heading for Davidson's proposal*

Whether they foresaw the writing was on the wall for convict transportation or were simply dissatisfied with the labour they were getting via this system, a large number of the NSW squattocracy were seeking alternatives. As early as 1837 many were willing to subscribe to a plan to bring in up to 400 Chinese workers.[27] This was despite the fact that only a fifth of the number promised by G. F. Davidson were to be skilled workers or mechanics. Davidson also asserted that as shepherds these workers would not be of great value. The wealthy of the colony, including Blaxland, Verge and Dumaresq subscribed "an advance of £5 for every Chinaman" in order to obtain 4 to 10 or even 20 workers.[28]

Davidson proposed obtaining the men through Singapore, as this was previous to the First Opium War and the forced opening of various ports in China itself. Chinese merchants were mainly responsible at that time for the junks that brought thousands of men from the provinces of Fujian and Guangdong to South East Asia to work on the British and Dutch plantations there. While this project did not proceed, the strong interest shown in contracted labour is interesting for a number of reasons. It is also noteworthy Davidson's approach to the potential workforce diverges strongly with that actually used when many thousands of contracted Chinese men were brought to NSW a decade later. In explaining the contracts Davidson proposed:

I can land the men in Sydney at £10 a-head, say £11, and add £1 for commission to my Singapore agent, for this the men would serve twelve months after their arrival in the Colony, getting fed of course, and they would serve a second year for £1 per month and rations ; after the second year they would expect wages something nearly equal to what free Europeans get here. [29] *If they get £15 a-year and rations, it will be* double *what they earn in and about Singapore.* [30]

Davidson also asserted:

From my long experience amongst Chinese, I have no limitation in recommending strongly to the settlers of New South Wales, the importation of them into this country ; as Carpenters, Cabinet-makers, Wheelwrights, Millers, Blacksmiths, Bricklayers and Brickmakers, Gardeners, Cooks, growers of Maize, Sugar, and Tobacco, and general labourers, I can with perfect safety recommend them. As Shepherds, I doubt whether they, would answer.[31]

Davidson felt "that 20 per cent, of the men brought here will be Mechanics" and recommended the "the drawing of lots" but not for the general labourers as "a son might be separated from a father, a brother from a brother, and so on, which would tend very much to render the men discontented." Davidson also added, somewhat prophetically as it turned out:

On the subject of ill-treatment, I would caution the settlers of New South Wales ; a Chinaman will not put up with it ...[32]

Another point made by Davidson worth noting was that:

Chinese emigrants never *bring their wives and families from their native country ; but this does not prevent their remaining many years in those countries where they find constant and profitable employment.*[33]

While Davidson obviously felt this was not a problem, the predominance of men did cause some disquiet at the time as it would continue to do in the future. As some Hunter River locals expressed it:

Chinese men by the thousand, without women, (they being a gross and sensual people, and addicted to a nameless vice) would be to pollute this land with crimes, which, with all its vices New South Wales is at present free from. If China women can be obtained along with the men it will be a useful speculation.[34]

Despite the number of subscribers, Davidson—who died in late 1838 - did not bring any Chinese men to NSW, apart from four who were thought of as "a sample".[35] It was not until more than 10 years later - after convict transportation had stopped, modifications made to NSW laws, and the Treaty of Nanjing forced open ports of the Qing Empire—that workers came under contracts far less generous than those proposed by Davidson, namely: "five years, at six pounds per annum, with rations and clothing".[36]

Master and Servants Act 1847

Davidson had proposed a 12 month contract which was the norm in Singapore and seems to have plenty of subscribers on those terms. Although not apparently a concern in the 1830s, by the 1840s it was believed that importing workers on contracts signed outside NSW required

amendments to the colony's laws. The unpromisingly named *Master and Servants Act* was the relevant legislation under which employment relations were managed. Remarkably, when first discussed in relation to contracts made outside the colony, the debate was in strongly negative terms. Slavery was considered the issue, though mainly in regard to South Sea Islands labourers.[37] Some apparently had a similar concern for people from China, and the Attorney General John Plunkett later described how the insertion, deletion and then final inclusion of a clause that enabled Chinese "importation" was achieved "by some *hocus pocus*".[38]

Whether by magic or other means, three amendments were made to the existing law: to allow the enforcement of foreign contracts, disallowing contracts made with South Sea Islanders, and "limiting" the length of contracts to five years.

Image 7: *NSW Attorney General John Plunkett*

These amendments to the Act were assented to on 16 August 1847[39] and stated that:

> *... all such contracts by indenture or other written agreement shall be of the like force and effect within the said Colony of New South Wales, ... no such contract shall be binding on any person to*

serve for a longer period than five years … nothing in this or the said recited Act contained shall be deemed or construed to apply to any native of any savage or uncivilized tribe inhabiting any Island or Country in the Pacific Ocean.[40]

By the end of the 1840s British consuls and merchants dominated the port of Amoy while legal amendments were now in place in the Colony of NSW. As a result, the conditions were now in place for the first large scale importation of indentured workers and the first large scale arrival of people from the Qing Empire. The following chapter will provide an overview of this movement—a migration that scarcely occupied a period longer than a single five-year contract, yet significantly altered the social fabric of the colony.

4

Vignette II - Kimboo

Illustration of the story concerning the asylum showing general conditions rather than a portrait of Kimboo specifically.

Kimboo

Not all of the Amoy men married and raised families in more or less prosperous circumstances. The story of Kimboo who arrived in 1853 and died aged 73 in 1893 is not a happy one.[41] Just as prosperity and family are more likely to leave markers in the records, so too does criminality. It should always be remembered that the tendency to leave a paper trail that is easy for historians to

follow can give a false impression as to typical circumstances. In fact, more average conditions are likely to be missed by historians due to being largely unrecorded. Nevertheless, unfortunate circumstances do happen and the life of Kimboo demonstrates that for these early immigrants from Fujian in Australia, just as with other immigrants, lives varied greatly.

Kimboo appears in the records not through naturalization applications but because he is accused and then put on trial for the murder of a shepherd named Garrick Burns in June 1860. This is a murder for which he was convicted on circumstantial but convincing evidence. The jury returned "a verdict of guilty, with a strong recommendation of mercy, on the ground of presumed insanity".[42] Despite this he was kept in a general prison until he once again committed a murder, this time of a fellow inmate.[43] Only then was he transferred to the Woogaroo Asylum where he was described as:

> *... a chinaman; an exceptionally clean and rather pleasant looking specimen too.*[44]

There Kimboo lived the rest of his life until dying in 1893, aged 73.[45]

5

3. He made lots of money by the venture

— numbers and ships

With these legal conditions now in place the recruitment of contracted workers began in earnest. This was a coordinated effort to introduce Chinese labourers into the colony undertaken by W. C. Wentworth and a group of influential associates. The supposed advantages of Chinese labour and how to secure it were circulated among leading squatters, reinforced by anonymous contributors in the newspapers. The legal basis for holding the Chinese workers to their occupations—discussed above—had been engineered by Wentworth.

***Image 8:** William Charles Wentworth*

According to Darnell, these measures indicate a "plan initiated during 1846 or 1847" and brought to fruition with the "experimental" importation of Chinese labourers aboard the *Nimrod* in 1848.[46] An example of the placement of correspondence in newspapers is an exchange of letters between Adam Bogue and Francis Syme in 1846, which discussed the possibilities and practical details of bringing Chinese workers to New South Wales from Amoy. Bogue declares the demand for cheap workers is great and Syme that "Fokeen men" are "more docile, work better, and get

less wages than Canton men".[47]

The majority of the indentured workers who arrived in NSW between 1847 and 1853 did so via the Port of Amoy. However, Singapore, Manila, Shanghai, Swatow and Hong Kong are also mentioned in the shipping lists and other sources.[48] In fact, the first handful to arrive—a total of 21 workers in four ships in 1847 and 1848—were from Hong Kong and Manila, and were possibly Cantonese speakers. Nevertheless, the big numbers were mostly from Amoy, with the first such group arriving in mid-1848. These were on the *Nimrod*, carrying 120 men, though this was soon followed with 149 men from Hong Kong on the *London*.

The year 1849 saw the arrival of smaller numbers—10 in three ships—from Hong Kong, Shanghai and Manila. Then two more Amoy ships—the *Cadet* and the *Gazelle* —brought in a total of 269 late that same year and in early 1850. From late 1850 to early 1853, with the exception of three ships—two from Shanghai with 29 men (9 reported to be "servants in the employment of foreigners") and one from Namao (Swatow) with 263 – a total of 11 ships brought in 2,515 men via Amoy. According to Darnell, these later arrivals were more speculative in nature than the earlier subscribed importations. This speculation was carried out by merchants such as Robert Towns, Captains Francis Lodge and Thomas Beckford Simpson.[49]

***Image 9:** Ship from letterhead of Robert Towns*

Thus from 1847 to 1853, 25 ships brought a total of 3,376 workers from China to NSW of which 2,904 came via Amoy. Hong Kong (179) and Swatow (263) provided the next largest numbers. This does not include a recorded 185 men who died on the voyages.[50]

These figures give a good indication of numbers but it is probable they are underestimates. Certainly, the US Consul reported a slightly higher figure at 3,685.[51] While other groups may not have been counted at all. Mr Fyfe, for example, reported:

> *When timber and labour were scarcest, Mr. Fyfe started off to Singapore, and brought down some cargoes of timber, and some scores of Chinese artizans. He made lots of money by the venture, both by selling part of the timber at once, and also by erecting houses with the aid of his Chinese workmen, which he sold or let.*[52]

It is not clear when exactly Fyfe did this, though a report from the end of 1848 may be referring to this importation. Regardless of Fyfe's involvement, it is interesting that the arrival of the *Philip Liang* from Singapore in December 1848 was after the first Amoy arrivals and included not only Chinese workers but a number of other peoples:

> *The number imported is 219 ; comprising 123 Chinamen, 81 Klings, (one female) 8 Malays, and the remainder natives of different parts of India.*[53]

What happened to this mixed group is unknown, though a positive account—"an industrious and well disposed body of men"—from A. Johnstone may be referring to some of them.[54] A less positive account comes from Superintendent Latrobe, based in Melbourne, who wrote to the Colonial Secretary in Sydney to complain that many members of this group were left without shelter on the streets in winter.[55] Something Mr Fyfe, or perhaps another contractor, did not concern themselves with apparently once their "lots of money" had been made.

Canton gold rush

By 1853 the gold rush had begun and larger numbers of people began to arrive directly from Guangzhou (Canton), either voluntarily or under credit-ticket rather than indentured labour contracts. Credit-tickets did not involve European agents but required a connection with someone (a wealthy relative or at least someone with village networks) willing to extend credit and trust in repayment. These usually provided an advance payment that could be used to settle debts or support a family before departure. Such "tickets" enabled people to take passage and repay the money after finding gold or jobs on arrival.[56]

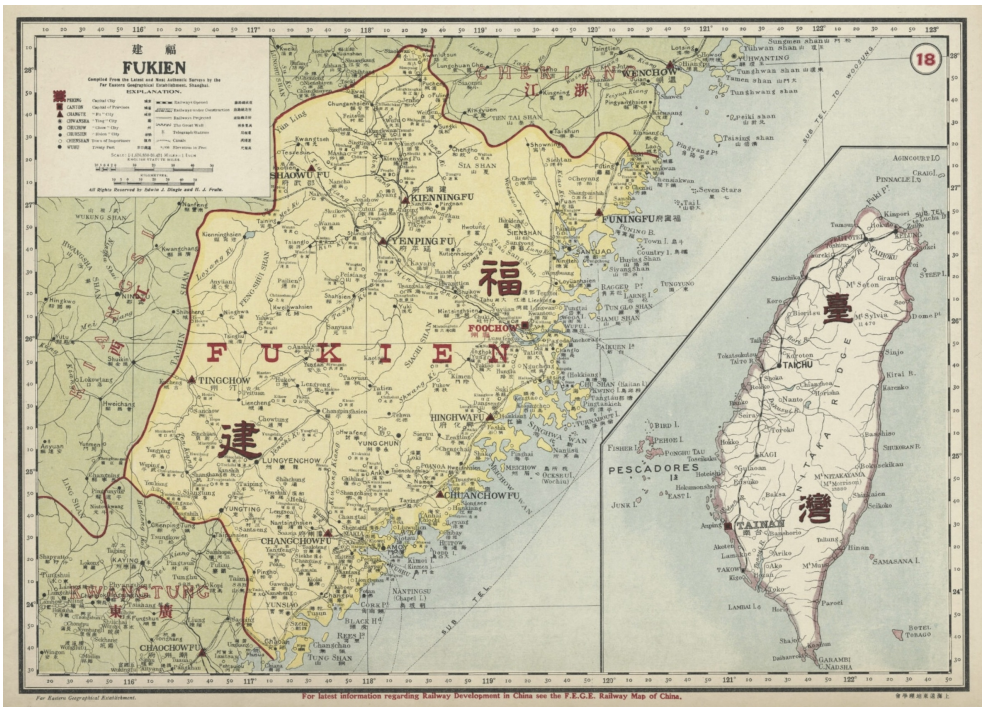
There seems to have been some overlap with the last Amoy arrivals and the first from Guangdong coming directly to seek for gold. In fact, a group of six from Guangzhou (and therefore speaking a different language from those of Amoy) arrived via Hong Kong in 1853 to work as shepherds in the Bathurst region. As their names are known from their entry in the Bathurst gaol records, it is possible they had broken their contracts to try their luck on the new gold fields nearby.[57] Thereafter arrivals of Chinese people can be assumed to be from Guangdong heading for the goldfields. For example, the nine who arrived at the end of 1853 on the *Phuttey Rahaman* from Singapore or the 219 on the *Bombay* also via Singapore the following year.[58]

In 1852 British observers noted the beginnings of the rush of people from Guangdong to the goldfields of what were, by 1851, the separate colonies of Victoria and New South Wales. This was a movement very different from those of the men from Amoy:

> *Should the accounts from Australia be encouraging, it is by no means improbable that a considerable voluntary emigration may take place to those regions. I have heard already of the emigration of several respectable Chinamen who have paid their own passages thither.* [59]

At this time some 15,000 were reported as heading for California:

> *Placards are distributed all over the country notifying the departure of vessels for California, and inviting persons to avail themselves of the opportunities thus afforded for proceeding thither. No obstacles are thrown in the way of intending emigration.*[60]



Fujian with it port of Amoy

Guangdong (Canton) and its proximity to Hong Kong

Image 10: *The two provinces of Guangdong and Fujian*

To villagers of Guangdong whether taking a ship either to California or Australia made little difference, and the Old Gold Mountain 舊金山 (gow gum san / jiu jin shan) quickly led to the New Gold Mountain[61] 新金山 (sun gum san / xin jin shan):

> *There is at present no passion for emigration to Australia; but should the Chinamen who have gone thither report favourably as to the prospects for settlers, there will be no want of supply of voluntary emigrants willing to pay for their passage, …* [62]

Dr Bowring, the Governor of Hong Kong, was correct in his predictions and a little over a year later he reported that in Australia:

> *The ship,* Rose of Sharon, *from Hong Kong 6th January, brings 503 Chinese passengers. Since the discovery of gold in California they have migrated in that direction, and notwithstanding their harsh treatment, thither they still go, some to join their friends, others from the spirit of adventure or the love of gain. The return of a few Chinese from Australia has in a great degree turned the flood of emigration in this direction, and there is no doubt that in the course of the current year many thousands will.*[63]

Around the same time, a Melbourne newspaper reported that there was "a very considerable influx of Chinese amongst us". The writer did not recognise any distinction between these new arrivals and the previous arrivals from Amoy. However, he did note that, at the beginning of the gold rush, the Chinese shepherds had stayed "quietly with the flocks they shepherded, while the white laborers passed away like a summer cloud".[64]

Thus, the last arrivals from Amoy in 1853 and the beginning of the arrival of goldseekers from Guangdong in early 1854 overlap in time. It is understandable that to many contemporaries the distinction between these two groups was unclear, as is often the case today. Before proceeding to see what work the more than 3,000 men contracted to do in the Colony of NSW, and under what environment, it is necessary to examine the circumstances of their recruitment and the conditions under which they travelled.

Image 11: *A common sight during the gold rush*

6

Vignette III - Thomas Coto

Family grave in Sale, Victoria

Thomas Coto

We have few surviving photos of the Amoy men and in the case of Thomas Coto only his fine

headstone. He arrived in what later became Victoria in 1848 and subsequently became a prominent farmer in the Sale district.

Interestingly, scattered mentions of this Amoy man-who also adopted the name Thomas-reveal aspects of a more personal nature than is usual. We know for example that Thomas Coto lost his first wife when "... his wife Henrietta Coto", "eloped in the early part of last year to New Zealand with one Charles Green."[65] Within a few years Thomas himself, presumably in attempting to make good the loss, was almost shot by an irate father when he caught him "with his arms wound lovingly around his step-daughter"[66].

In addition to his love life, we know Thomas was on the side of the working man as his obituary makes note of an incident when his "decided stand taken in opposition" ensured a move to "reduce the wages of farm labourers" fell through.

At the time of his death in 1883 aged only 52 Thomas left five children and his obituary goes on the say: "He was one of the oldest, and most enterprising farmers in the district and was noted for his undoubted integrity and honesty, and was in consequence highly respected and esteemed."

Despite vicissitudes:

> *By indomitable perseverance and energy he struggled on, and latterly fortune smiled upon him and at the time of his death, he had accumulated a large amount of valuable property. He was a large employer of farm labourers, by whom he was always greatly respected, was ever ready and willing to extend a helping hand in cases of distress and in an unassuming and quiet manner he performed charitable deeds that would set an example to his more enlightened and wealthy brethren.*[67]

7

4. By the prospect of minute advantage

— recruitment & conditions

The question of the conditions under which the more than 3,000 Amoy men found their way to the Australian colonies is closely bound up with the so-called Amoy Riots (really protests) of 1852. This is not only because these protests effectively ended the movement of contracted labour, at least as far as Australia was concerned, but also because the Court of Inquiry into the so called riots gives us the best evidence we have concerning the nature of these conditions.

Conditions of recruitment

The exact conditions under which men were recruited as indentured labourers are subject to much argument and controversy. Certainly, a wide variety of conditions existed under which many thousands of people embarked for places such as Singapore, Batavia, Vietnam and the Philippines, ranging from free to indebted to enslaved. What conditions applied to that relatively small proportion who embarked for the Colony of NSW in a handful of years are equally unclear. According to one description of the emigration system from Amoy to Australia written in 1852, all was voluntary and well run.[68] However, this account is so overwhelmingly positive that it is almost certainly untrue and was seemingly written to convince readers in Sydney that the reports of kidnapping and coercion were not accurate.

Of much greater credibility is the exchange of letters by British and Qing officials investigating the aftermath of the Amoy Riots, which took place in the same year Paul Pax was writing.[69] In this correspondence the hostility of the local population to the recruitment for overseas work is reported. As well, great doubt is thrown on the honesty and morals of Syme, Muir, and Co. and James Tait & Co., the chief agents responsible for recruiting labourers to Sydney among other destinations. The agents argued that all was voluntary and the conditions as humane as could be contrived. The British consul was not convinced, while the Qing official declared that "only by suppressing lawlessness can the common people live in safety".[70] The trade, at least from Amoy, ended that year.

Even before any "coolies" were shipped to Australia, a wide divergence seems to have already existed between the private British agents who would handle such business and British government officials based at Amoy. A series of letters from 1847 published in a Melbourne newspaper in 1848 discusses the legality and conditions of shipping Chinese men to British colonies.[71] From this correspondence, it is obvious there was no love lost between the British Consul at Amoy, T. H. Layton, and the merchant F. D. Syme, as one attempted to extract information and the other all but tells him to go to hell.

For the purposes of the movement of men through Amoy, the most significant aspect of this correspondence is Layton's consideration that "the shipment of emigrant Chinese coolies" is not "a purely commercial transaction", the equivalent of "the shipment of shirtings". This stands in stark contrast to the merchant Syme's not quite declaration that, as far as he is concerned, this is exactly what it is. A difference in attitude that led to much human suffering. [72]

Image 12: *Grave of Francis Darby Syme, Edinburgh*

From the same British official, we also have an intriguing account of the first shipment of men

and boys on the *Nimrod* as well as a discussion of the morality of the general political and social impact of the recruitment. Layton expresses concern on a number of levels about this development in emigration. From it we learn that 21 of the group are considered "boys" and though it is unclear what age this means they were to be paid considerably less than the "men". Though their rations were to be the same apparently. Layton considered the group to have been "extracted from the lowest and poorest, and in some cases from the most vicious classes in Amoy".[73] He was also worried that the citizens of Amoy consider the process to be "buying men", that is, slavery rather than contracts.[74]

While the Amoy Consul acknowledged that "one petition only has been placed in my hands from the father of one of the boys, whilst the parents of another have been heard to bewail the enticing away their son." He nevertheless felt that the dangers of upsetting people high and low was great, explaining:

> *Were, however, any influential persons among the literary persons or wealthy merchants to complain of the enticement away of some member of their family—of a son for example, who had run away from the debts incurred by his own vices and indiscretions; some hope-less scapegrace, gambler or rake, about to seek in a new country the character he had lost in his own; and were such parents to represent the matter to the Viceroy, I can well conceive that much trouble would ensue; but greater troubles still would arise if the turbulent, or as they call themselves, the "independent" population of Amoy should believe that the English enticed their children from their homes by money, conveyed them on board a ship, and carried them off to our distant colonies without the hope or possibility of return.* [75]

Here Layton has given us a wide range of possible circumstances under which a person might have found themselves in NSW. The Consul also noted that there was

> *a wide distinction between voluntary emigration to Singapore, &c., and between the "buying men" for terms of years.*

He felt that over time a continuation of such shipments would lead to an outburst "of popular wrath", a prediction Layton, who died in 1850, did not live to see confirmed in the Amoy riots of 1852.[76]

The Amoy Riots, 1852

The aftermath of the disturbances that Layton had feared—which his superior in Hong Kong, J. G. Bonham,[77] had downplayed—provides the best evidence of the recruitment conditions for those who arrived in the Colony of New South Wales in the late 1840s and early 1850s. One trigger to these disturbances was the mutiny on the *Robert Bowne*:

> *The return to the district of Amoy of a great number of coolies who have escaped from the "Robert Bowne" and other vessels, and who have reported to their countrymen the ill-usage and cruelties to which they and their companions were subjected, will, I have no doubt, greatly augment the difficulties of obtaining a supply of labourers, and not less deteriorate the quality of those who will be now disposed to leave China.*[78]

The immediate trigger of what became known as the Amoy Riots, at least as far as the British were concerned, began at the end of 1852. This was when a Mr Vallancey (who was possibly mistaken

for Syme) of the ship *Australia* was attacked in the streets of Amoy with spears, sticks and stones such that his life was "at first despaired of".[79] Zhao, the Imperial Commissioner, who the British referred to as the Maritime Magistrate or the Taoutai (道臺), received a report from the Acting Consul.[80] His reply repeats most of the same account but notably adds that some of the foreigners had been drunk.

> 閤廈紳民食呈各情互果 ... 該英人究因何事夤夜秉醉在 ...[81]

> *The gentry and commoners of Amoy together presented their statements, attesting to the various circumstances. It remains to be clarified for what reason these Englishmen, late at night, drunk and disorderly, found themselves involved.* [82]

Image 13: *A Qing civil official of 5th rank*

Zhao also noted that marines had been disembarked from the steamship squadron (or steam powered warship—火輪戰船). In a series of exchanges with the Acting Consul the Imperial Commissioner had strongly resisted this proposal and warned that such a measure would only worsen the situation:

> 至於領事所議，欲令英吉利國兵丁登岸保護該國人等一節，斷乎不可。兵丁帶械擅入街衢，於法無據，於約未允，勢必驚擾閭閻，滋生事端。地方綏靖之責，本屬中國官司，外國兵丁斷不應准擅自登岸。[83]

> *As to the consul's proposal to land foreign marines in order to guard their nationals: this is **absolutely impermissible**. Landing armed men in the streets violates both the regulations and the intent of the treaty. Such a move would alarm the populace, disturb order, and give rise to greater conflict. The responsibility for maintaining order within Xiamen rests solely with the Chinese authorities. Foreign armed men must not be permitted to come ashore.*[84]

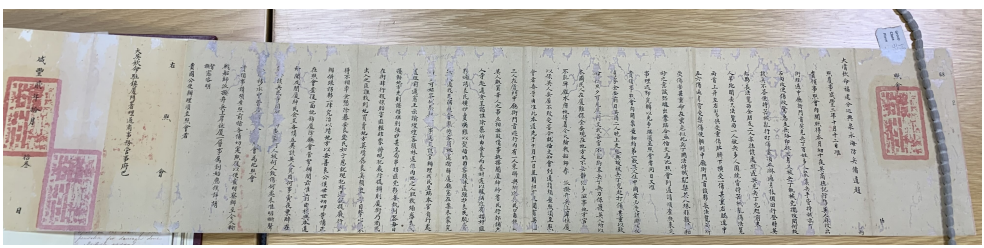


***Image 14:** Imperial Commissioner to British Consul.*

Acting Consul Backhouse rejected the idea that the antagonism created by the coolie trade was the issue and instead focused on the attack on the Englishmen and the need for security for foreigners. The wider context of these letters, despite Backhouse's rejection of Zhao's arguments, is a number of other clashes in which Qing subjects were killed. The proposal to station British soldiers had been made before Vallancey was stabbed and the attack appears in this light to be the final excuse Backhouse needed to ignore the opposition of Zhao and the Qing Government.[85]

As Layton had predicted in 1848 and Zhao knew in 1852 if not before, the citizens of Amoy had by 1852 reached their limit and were now protesting strongly against a trade they saw as little better than slavery. In true colonial style, and against the opposition of the "Taoutai", the British used marines — "a strong party from Her Majesty's steam-sloop "Salamander,"" — to defend themselves and their property. The "total number of killed and wounded may be estimated at from ten to twelve." Acting-Consul Backhouse, who called the attack on British subjects (in which no one was killed) "an atrocious outrage", described this number as "not very great".[86]

***Image 15:** The* Salamander *– sent to Australia eventually*

These so-called "Amoy riots" can be said to have had a number of consequences. Most significantly, it virtually halted the recruitment of workers from Amoy via foreign shipping. Certainly, the last ship to carry men to Australia was the *Spartan*, leaving Amoy in December 1852 just after the protests. The *Spartan* was also subject to an attempted takeover by its passengers while on the way to Sydney.

A beneficial—for historians at least—consequence of these protests by the people of Amoy was that the violence, having directly affected British subjects and property, inspired an investigation into the trade by British officials. The thoroughness of this investigation and the careful recording of witnesses, Chinese as well as European, adds greatly to our knowledge of the conditions under which people were recruited and embarked to Australia.

From this inquiry, ordered by the Hong Kong based John Bowring, and the questioning of both European and Chinese witnesses, we learn a great deal. Primarily, that many men were tricked and held against their will, that the merchant Syme was well aware of this, and that these circumstances were the main cause of the protests. We also learn that there was a separation in the opposition to the foreign recruiters between the Chinese merchants and the general population. It is also possible to see that the term "riot" is a somewhat loose description for an organised confrontation that involved placarding the city, calling for change beforehand, and targeting the Syme hong (depot) specifically to release men rather than to plunder.[87]

The attitude of distaste expressed by British officials towards the British merchants is also evident. Though this emotion was nothing compared to the local hatred of the Chinese crimps (recruiters), many of whom seem to have been from Guangdong province. Neither were potential "coolies" always innocent, with some it seems trying to take advantage of the system to obtain free food and clothing.

Despite being a rich source of information, the practical outcome of the inquiry was disappointing. Syme himself, undoubtedly the direct cause of the disturbances, received only a token fine, while the families of those who were killed obtained little or no compensation. Syme did abandon the coolie trade, though James Tait simply moved his operations to the port of

Namao where there was no British Consul.

Image 16: *Sir John Bowring, Governor of Hong Kong*

Even before these disturbances began, John Bowring, who had replaced Bonham in Hong Kong as "Acting British Plenipotentiary and Superintendent of Trade and Governor of Hong Kong", had been concerned as the numbers of ships seeking to load workers and hence the numbers being recruited had begun to greatly increase. Bowring wrote to the then Consul at Amoy:

> *... to request that you will keep me accurately advised of all that is taking place. I need not remind you that a vast mass of human interests, human misery, and consequent responsibility are involved, nor call to your recollection the wretchedness and crime which has been associated with the transport of coolies.*[88]

Bowring, on receiving the November 27th report on what had happened in Amoy dispatched "Mr. Secretary Harvey, in Her Majesty's steamer *Hermes*".[89] Bowring acknowledged that the immediate cause of the disturbance was the "interference of a British merchant with some of the authorities at Amoy". Bowring ordered this investigation on the basis that "it is equally the duty of Her Majesty's officers to protect the Chinese against the aggressions of any of her subjects, as to protect the persons and property of our own countrymen". This had certainly not been the tone of Acting Consul Backhouse's report.[90] Thus, the order that Mr Harvey was "to assist you in any inquiries which may be desirable, not only to throw light on the causes of the late disturbances, but to investigate generally the subject of coolie emigration", may have been seen as a reprimand.[91]

Image 17: *H.M.S. Hermes*

Fredrick Harvey's instructions were to set up a "Consular Court" which he did with the *Hermes* captain Commander Fishbourne and Consul Backhouse. These officals having arrived at Amoy on December 12th, the "Court of Inquiry" as it was termed was completed by the December 17th.

In that relatively short period, the three interviewed a large number of witnesses. The witnesses included not only merchants and those English speakers assaulted, but also missionaries and a number of Chinese citizens. These last ranging from actual "coolies" (人工) who had been held in the pens to brokers (客頭) and others. Also in the report are a number of

petitions from relatives of those accidentally killed by the firing of the British marines on the protesting crowd. Syme and his clerk Cornabe were also tried and fined 200 dollars (£4 – or less than a contracted worker would be paid in a year) and 20 dollars (5s) respectively for a breach of the treaty for "going to a police station and rescuing a coolie-broker."[92]

It is not known what Bowring thought of this wrist slap but the full report of the inquiry makes for informative and interesting reading. As does the "Minutes of Consular Court at Amoy". These minutes were of the trial of "Francis Darby Syme, merchant for a breach of the Treaty between Her Britannic Majesty and the Emperor of China" (the Treaty of Nanjing). Under this heading Syme faced two charges: that he visited a police-court to retrieve a "Chinese coolie broker" and so caused a riot which injured two British subjects (the 10 to 12 dead Chinese subjects were not referred to), and that he did "assault a subject of the Emperor of China". Based on the evidence previously presented to the inquiry as well as "a letter from his Excellency the Toutee of Amoy", Syme, and his clerk—who had acted as his interpreter and given evidence against him—were found guilty of a breach of the treaty and fined.[93]

8

Vignette IV - William Edward Oram Chi

William and Hannah - an extremely rare photo of an Amoy man
[First appeared in Bagnall, Kate, "The transnational Chinese family in Australia", 2013.]

William Edward Oram Chi arrived in 1854 and originally worked in Sydney as an "artificial flower-maker".[94]

By 1864, William was living at Scone when he first applied to be naturalized as a British subject. On this first application William stated he was "a confectioner by trade" and signed his

name with a good hand.[95]

His application was certified by, among others, the Wesleyan Minister Joseph Oram. The adoption of the minister's name was due to his conversion to Christianity and baptism by Joseph Oram. William married Hannah Mason in 1865 and they had a number of children.[96] William applied again for naturalization in 1868 and this time was successful. He died suddenly in 1883, while still working as a storekeeper in Scone .[97]

9

4. cont... The Court of Inquiry

Minutes of Evidence taken at a Court of Inquiry held at Amoy to investigate the Causes of the late Riots, and into the manner in which Coolie Emigration has been lately carried on at that Port.

Depositions taken during an investigation held at Her Britannic Majesty's Consulate at Amoy, into the causes of the riotous proceedings which took place at that port on the 21st, 22nd, 23rd, and 24th of November, 1852.

Monday, December 13, 1852.

PRESENT:

John Backhouse, Esq., Her Majesty's Officiating Consul.
Frederick Harvey, Esq., Secretary to Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary in China.
Commander E. Gardiner Fishbourne, R.N., Commanding Her Majesty's steam-sloop "Hermes."

Image 18: *Court of Inquiry*

The inquiry itself was more extensive than the proceedings against Syme and included a lengthy summary by Frederick Harvey. This report quickly established that Syme was the immediate cause of the riot when he removed one of his brokers from the custody of a magistrate. This broker had been delivered to the magistrate by an angry crowd who accused him of placing people in the pens by trickery or worse, force. Syme's intervention only exasperated the citizens of Amoy more, who, seeing the powerlessness of their magistrates, took matters into their own hands. They recaptured the broker and began attacking random foreigners. Vallancey was possibly mistaken for Syme, who was in fact struck at one point before taking refuge in his hong.[98]

After retaking the broker, the angry citizens placarded the town with their objections and targeted the hongs of Syme and also that of James Tait, who was accused of similar practices. The fearful British residents called for assistance from the marines of the *Salamander*. Around 20 armed men fought a number of engagements before the weight of "brickbats" caused them to open fire, killing and wounding not only a number in the crowd but also several bystanders, including "a child, at her mother's breast."[99] While the general attitude of the British residents at the time seemed to be that the crowd was only after plunder, careful questioning by the Court of Inquiry members demonstrated that the focus was on the hongs of Syme and Tait, and that either releasing workers or capturing brokers were the primary aims.[100]

Harvey, and Bowring his superior in Hong Kong, were well aware that Syme's actions were only the spark and that the general practices of emigration recruitment were the heart of the problem. The Court of Inquiry's purpose was not only to "investigate the Causes of the late Riots", but also to examine "the manner in which Coolie Emigration has been lately carried on" at Amoy. The inquiry therefore was largely aimed at attempting to get at the truth of this issue with Harvey clearly concluding that "some of our merchants have been much to blame for the reckless manner (to say the least of it) in which coolies have been obtained." For Harvey the "principal point" was that arriving ships were anxious to load a cargo of workers as quickly as possible to limit charges. As a result, they were not particular about how and who was recruited. These details were left to Chinese "coolie-brokers" who, being paid per head, were not particular themselves. The result was that "abuses, fraud, deception, and, in some instances, kidnapping (but not many cases of the latter, as men are not easily kidnapped after 17 or 18 years of age), are the natural consequences of the premium so paid for every man." [101]

The transcripts of the witnesses provide much insight into the tangible workings of the recruitment process. These witnesses included missionaries living in Amoy and Chinese people themselves. In summary, the witness evidence informs us that men in villages around Amoy were often tricked by promises of work into entering pens set up near the hongs of the British merchants or boarding the holding ship *Emigrant* owned by Tait.[102] It was also implied that the situation had intensified in recent years, with it significant that people who had friends and relatives, as opposed to the friendless, were being increasingly caught in the recruitment process.

That once in the pens it was difficult to leave was also proven. Though some were able to secure the release of family members by appealing to the agents, a procedure that seems to have relied on having contacts in the foreign community. This only demonstrating the likelihood that many would have been unable to secure the release of their relatives. The lending of a small amount of money, or even the provision of food while in the pens, were also used as means of keeping people bound until a ship was ready to depart. This aspect of affairs was muddied by the possibility that some were willing to risk their freedom in exchange for a period of free food. The final signing of the contracts only took place when on board a ship, with the captain acting as the signatory to all workers' contracts, and thereby being empowered to sell these contracts at the destination.[103]

The Court of Inquiry – the evidence

While the investigation into the causes of the disturbances in Amoy at the end of 1852, and into the emigration trade more generally, was carried out by the British, it nevertheless allowed some Chinese voices to be heard. Given the scarcity of evidence from Chinese people themselves, the British-held Court of Inquiry provides the best source for understanding how Europeans recruited and treated workers at this time. As both a Chinese petition and one member of the court each summarised the Amoy trade in indentured workers:

> *From the time that the barbarians began to trade at Amoy, they have had the practice of buying people to sell again; subjecting those guiltless of crime to cruel treatment, and employing evil-disposed and traitorous natives to entice away peaceable people.*[104]

> *I find the moral perception of so many in this trade to be so much impaired that they are unable to see they are violating law as well as the commonest moralities.*[105]

Promises and trickery[106]

Given the two summaries above it is not surprising that there was ample testimony of less than honest practices. The men in villages around Amoy were often tricked by promises of work into entering pens set up near the hongs of the British merchants or the holding ship *Emigrant* owned by Tait. Thus we have:

> *... persons have been carried away as coolies against their will, (Rev. Burns, missionary, p.45.)*

> *... deceived by promises of work. (Wu-tsang, servant to Rev. Burns and a native of Amoy, p.46.)*

> *... some men told him to come to Amoy ... with some potatoes which he was selling ... it was suggested that ... he should go with him on board the "Emigrant" coolie depot, and that he would give him wages for working on board his ship. After being there for some time, he found out that it was intended to send him away with the coolies. (Dr. Young, missionary, p.47.)*

> *I have not the slightest doubt that in some instances they have made use of false pretences to entice them to Amoy. (Robert Jackson, British merchant, established at Amoy, p.53.)*

Perhaps the most telling description of a person being tricked was that related to a missionary by one of his servants:

> *He was a native of a village distant somewhere about two days journey from Amoy, engaged in selling ground-nuts as a livelihood; that a coolie broker met him, and; expressing a warm interest in his welfare, urged him to accompany him to Amoy, where he would secure for him a more lucrative employment. That the young man thus induced, came to Amoy, and was confined in Mr. Syme's coolie-shed, where he for the first time learnt he had been brought to Amoy to be shipped to some foreign place, and being unwilling to go, he, by means of an opening in the water-closet, let himself down into the water and mud of the river, and thus made his escape. (Rev. J. Doty, American missionary at Amoy, p.54.)*

Image 19: *Enticing workers (from a later period)*

The questioning by the Court of Inquiry members was thorough and covered many witnesses:

> *Q. What promises were made to you?—A. The coolie broker deceived me by telling me that there were houses building and labour to be had."*
>
> (Chin Po, *a native of the province of Fuhkien*[107] *(one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from*

Mr. Syme's sheds), p.60.)

I was offered work; I asked what sort of work and was told that I should know on arrival at Amoy, when I was pushed into Mr. Symes' sheds and the door closed.

*(*Shaon Tung Keung, *a native of the Island of Amoy (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.60.)*

Q. Did the broker pay you money, and how much?—A. The money was not paid to me; it was paid to the man who induced me to come down to Amoy, who promised me, I being a shoemaker, to give me work at shoemaking.

(Chin Choa She, a native of the province of Fuhkien (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), pp.60-61.)

Once trickery had done its work, physical violence was also employed:

Q. What promises did they make to you?—A. The coolie broker told me there was a situation at four dollars a month in English employ.

Q. How did you come into Mr. Syme's hong?- A. The broker told me that he had to sweep the floor, and when he got me near the entrance of the coolie compound I was pushed in.

*(*Chin Gan, *a native of Fuhkien province (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.61.)*

I was promised work in a boot-shop with inducement of gain, and on coming here I was pushed into Mr. Syme's sheds.

(Sen Shan, a native of Fuhkien (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.61.)

I was promised work at Amoy, and on arriving at Syme's hong I was pushed into the coolie sheds by three men, who told me that if I refused to go in they would beat me.

(Chang Fang, a native of the Island of Amoy (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.61.)

The details continue, including that some of the men were from the Fujian port of Quanzhou to the north, some from Amoy island itself and others from nearby localities:

I was coming to Amoy, and fell in on the road with an acquaintance with mine named Kew, who took me to a mans house named Keen, where he left me. On inquiring for him, I was told by Keen that I was sold to him and belonged to him, and could not go.

(Chin Sin, a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.62.)

Q. How did you come to Amoy? – A. The broker went to Chin Chew [Quanzhou 泉州], and called at my house, promising me wages, and when there was no cargo to land that I should wash the decks.

... the broker promised me work there in the shape of landing goods, at the rate of 120 cash per diem.

I have a son at home, and being myself an only son, wish to go home.

(Seang Tsee Sang, a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.62.)

I was seeking a passage from Chin Chew to Amoy, when I met a man (a broker), who told me to come along with him; that there was labour at 120 cash per diem on board of an English ship, when I was taken on board by him.

*(*Wang He, *a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), pp.62-63.)*

I came from my native place to Amoy, to inquire after a brother who is abroad. I met a man on the road (who turned out to be a coolie broker), who took me to his house for the night, and told me he would help me to find out my brother in the morning. Next morning the broker told me my brother was in a foreign country and the best plan would be to inquire for him on board an English ship. I then went on board the "Emigrant" with the broker, who would not allow me to land when I wished to do so, on finding out that my brother was not on board.

(Chin Kinfung, a native of Amoy Island (one of the seven brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.63).

I came to Amoy in search of my father, and met a man whose name is Chao, a coolie broker, who told me he would help me to find him out.

*(*Hwang Chuen, *a native of Amoy Island (one of the seven brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.63).*

Despite the evidence of missionaries and Chinese people there are always those who claim to know nothing or who will blame the victim:

Q. It has been stated in evidence here that there are many, and some still kept in confinement on board, who have been entrapped, and others who gave witness to that effect. Are you aware of it?- A. I am not aware of anything of that kind. I believe there are no coolies kept on board against their will.

Q. But surely you will admit that their not returning was proof that they were unwilling to embark under the circumstances in which they were going ? — A. Yes, I will admit so ; but may add that I heard that they sold the clothing which had been given to them.

Q. What was the value of a suit ? — A. About one dollar.

(John Connolly, partner in the house of Tait and Co., p.65.)

Alongside the "know nothings" are those who do know something who attempt to alleviate the abuses while of course still benefiting from the system. One such was British merchant Robert Jackson who gave evidence as to the abuses he had seen in so far as they were perpetrated by British merchants other than himself. Jackson also posted helpful notices in Chinese:

A week before the sailing of a vessel I issued placards all over the town, stating that these men were about leaving the place, and requesting their relations or friends to claim them if they did not wish them to go."

(Robert Jackson, British merchant, established at Amoy, p.53.)

Should any persons, victims of abduction, be unwilling to proceed, their parent or brethren must come to the premises of the firm, and procure an order to the vessel for their restoration, and their delivery shall on no account be denied.

(Appendix (C). Notice, *November 17, 1852, True translation, W. H. MEDHURST, Chinese Secretary, p.72.)*

This seems straight forward and generous enough, assuming communication is not hindered, but a second notice adds a caveat that reveals the limits of a merchant's generosity.

*Should any become the victims of abduction, a word spoken to Jackson at the time of telling off, and payment of all expenses, will secure their being returned * to their homes ; this promise may be depended upon.*

** My native assistant reads this "will secure their being returned, expenses paid;" a rendering which, though perhaps not intended, the original will likewise bear. — W. H. M.*

(Appendix (D). Notice, *-, 1852, True translation, W. H. MEDHURST, Chinese Secretary, p.73.)The need to repay all expenses would perhaps be a prohibitive bar for some to any actual return. Certainly, Medhurst did not believe the rendering of his assistant—that the expenses of a return would be paid by Jackson—was likely.*

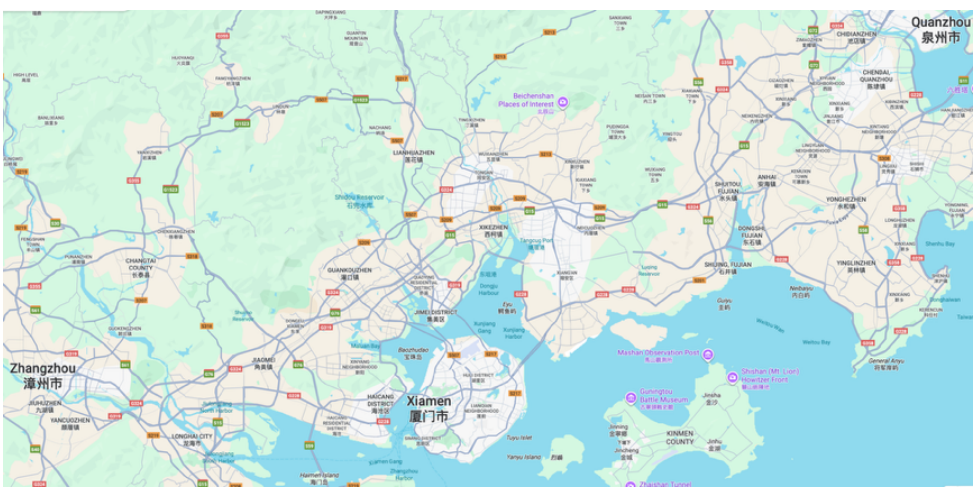


***Image 20:** Hinterland of Xiamen within 1-2 days walk*

Entrapment and temptation

It would appear that Jackson, like Syme, felt the advance of food or clothing gave them rights over a person. Rights that included imprisonment and shipment overseas. As the "Scholars and Merchants of Amoy" put it in their placard put up before the disturbances began:

By the prospect of minute advantage they drew away lonely and destitute persons, while they held out alluring baits to seduce the younger members of settled families.

(Appendix (A). Proclamation issued by the Scholars and Merchants of Amoy, p.71.)

As Dr Winchester put it before the disturbances broke out and a missionary giving evidence agreed:

> *... one great temptation they hold out is, that they at once offer to supply plenty of food and lodgings for the day to every one willing to be mustered, ...*[108]

> *I suppose some of those who have attempted to escape originally entered principally for the sake of food, without having been decoyed.*
>
> *(Rev. John V. N. Talmage, American missionary at Amoy, p.70.)*

The evidence of actual potential "coolies" is more nuanced:

> *Q. Have you received any money?-A. I left home with 400 cash, and borrowed 200 on the road from the broker; and that is the only sum I ever received.*
>
> *(Seang Tsee Sang, a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depot), p.62.)*

> *I was offered 30 cash as a present (a little more than a penny), which I refused, and it was afterwards left on my bed; a Nankin jacket and & pair of Dungaree trousers were given me, but my own were thrown into the sea.*
>
> *(*Chin Sin, *a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.62.)*

> *Q. Did the broker pay you money, and how much?-A. The money was not paid to me; it was paid to the man who induced me to come down to Amoy, who promised me, I being a shoemaker, to give me work at shoemaking.*
>
> *(Chin Choa She, a native of the province of Fuhkien (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), pp.60-61.)*

The merchant Syme seems to have felt that he was being put upon:

> *On the occasion of the interview with Mr. Syme, this gentleman declared it to be a great piece of injustice that any one should interfere to prevent his retaking the coolie, after having fed him, perhaps, a month.*
>
> *(Rev. J. Doty, American missionary at Amoy, p.54.)*

> *I found Mr. Syme having hold of a coolie man ... he evidently must have struck him ... he had been hanging about his hong for the last three or four months, being fed by him, but on going on board the ships he turned out such a great blackguard that the captains had been glad in every instance to get rid of him, and that only a few hours before he had been turned on shore from one of the emigrant ships about to sail, and that the reason of his attack was that he had found him gambling in his shed, where he had strictly forbidden his entrance.*
>
> *(James Humphrey Singleton Hooper, clerk of Her Majesty's steam-sloop "Salamander", p.57.)*

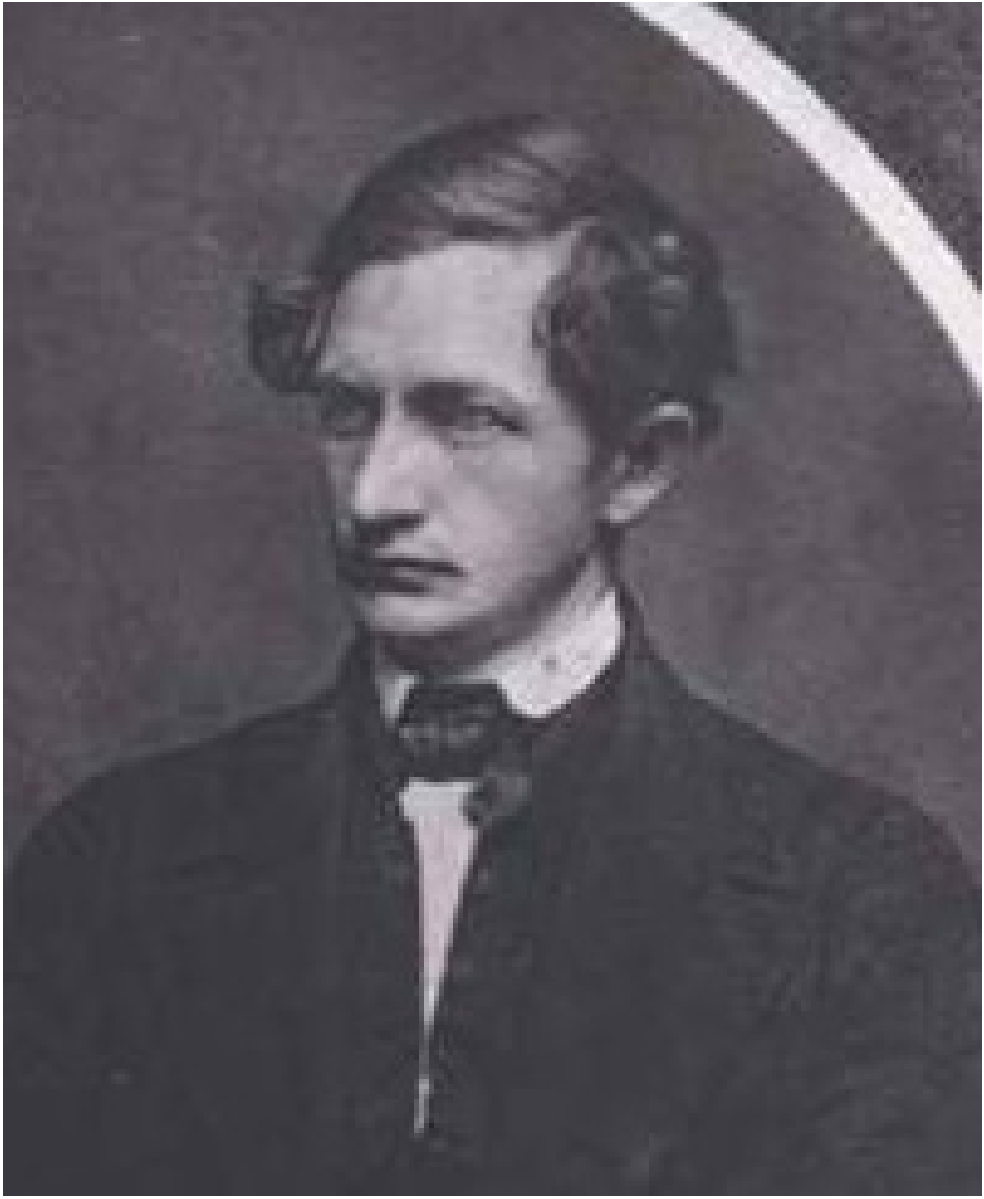


Image 21: *Rev. J. Doty, American missionary at Amoy*

Confinement

That once in the pens it was difficult to leave was also proven by numerous witnesses both Chinese and non-Chinese:

I believe they were under some restraint,
(William Hugh Nurse, acting-mate of Her Majesty's steam-sloop "Salamander", p.52.)

... they were Messer's Syme's, Muir & Co's crimps beating a man who had run away from their shed. Very shortly afterwards they carried him to Mr. Syme's shed.

(Robert Jackson, British merchant, established at Amoy, p.53.)

Q. Is it your opinion that the coolies or some of them were in confinement there?— A. Yes, I am strongly of that opinion.

(James Harvey, chief engineer of Her Majesty's sloop "Hermes", p.59.)

Q. Do you know Le Tsai, the coolie broker now before you? (Referring to a man in court.)

A. Yes, I saw him keeping the doors to prevent coolies coming from the shed of Messrs. Syme, Muir, &Co., on the 14th instant.

*(*Sanhee, *Chinese linguist to the Amoy Consulate, p.59.)*

Q. Were you confined against your will in Mr. Syme's sheds?- A. Yes, I was, and was not allowed to come out.

Q. How long were you confined?- A. Sixteen days

Q. How were you prevented from going out of the sheds?— A. The doors were bolted.

Q. Did you apply to go out— A. I asked but was refused, and on reiterating my request I was beaten.

Q. Who beat you?— A. The doorkeeper and a coolie broker.

*(*Chin Po, *a native of the province of Fukien (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.60.)*

Q. Were you prevented from leaving Mr. Syme's sheds?— A. I was prevented from coming out.

Q. How were you prevented? —A. The doors were closed, and when I wrote letters to my relations I was not allowed to send them.

Q. Have you been beaten?— A. I have; I was stripped of my good clothes, and when I asked for them I was beaten by the coolie broker.

*(*Shaon Tung Keung, *a native of the Island of Amoy (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.60.)*

Q. Were you confined in Mr. Syme's sheds?— A. Yes, and was not allowed to come out.

Q. Did you ask to come out?-A. I did, but the broker refused, saying that he had paid me money and I belonged to him.

*(*Chin Choo She, *a native of the province of Fuhkien (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.60)*

Q. Were you confined in Mr. Syme's sheds!- A. Yes; I was not allowed to come out.

Q. Did you express a wish to come out?—A. I did not ask, but on trying to go out I was forced in again by blows.

Q. Were you ever beaten?—A. In the beginning, being reluctant to stay in, I was beaten.

*(*Chin Gan, *a native of Fuhkien province (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.61.)*

I was, and not allowed to come out, and was beaten when endeavouring to do so.

*(*Sen Shan, *a native of Fuhkien (one of the six brought by Mr. Sinclair from Mr. Syme's sheds), p.61.)*

Despite this evidence of restraint, it seems that some were able to secure the release of family members by appealing to the agents. This procedure seems to have relied on contacts in the foreign community and only demonstrates the probability that those without these contacts would have been unable to secure the release of relatives.

My servant also stated, that on going to the shed they could find no mode of communicating with the young man, and he also stated that there were the friends of several others at the same time in attendance there for like objects and with no better success.

I wrote a note to Mr. Cornabe, describing the young man's name and native village, &c.

(Rev. Burns, p.45.)

My Chinese teacher stated to me one morning that he had a female relative from the country making application to him for the release of a nephew from the coolie ship.

(Dr. Young, p.47.)

Q. Was your relative prevented from leaving the ship?- A, He was.

(Seaon Lhin, *a native of Amoy, p.51.)*

10

Vignette V - John Gor Tuyan

Annie Tuyan, daughter of John Gor Tuyan

John Gor Tuyan (1827-1893) lived most of his life in southern Queensland, working at a range of occupations while raising a family of six. He signed the marriage certificate of his daughter Margaret with his full Chinese name—吳周燕 —in a good hand which indicates that he could

probably read and write in Chinese, which is likely if his father had been a doctor as his death certificate records.[109]

Gor is therefore his family name and Tuyan, adopted as the family name in Australia, is his personal name. Gor Tuyan is fairly close to the pronunciation of these characters in Southern Min (probably Hokkien).

John, listed as a cook, married Mary Smith a "house servant" from Ireland in 1862 at Beeboo station on the Queensland – New South Wales border; registered in NSW at Warialda.[110] By 1867 John was working as a farmer at Middle Ridge near Toowoomba when he was involved in some court cases. One case concerned a tarpaulin stolen from his home and another a claim for unpaid wages.[111] Farming did not go smoothly and at one point his crop was seized for non-payment of a debt.[112] As a result John seems to have taken up butchering instead, or at least as a supplement. Additional income was undoubtedly needed as by this time his family had grown to four daughters and two sons by 1874.[113] In a rare example of preservation of their Chinese heritage, his first son was given the original Chinese family name of Gor.[114]

John continued to work at various trades, a storekeeper in 1886, at "Brisbane-street, Little Ipswich", though he was soon declared insolvent.[115] When his daughter Susan Jane was married in 1889, John's occupation was given as a cook and later that same year when daughter Margaret married, he was recorded as a boarding house keeper.[116] Finally on his death in 1893, John was listed again as a storekeeper.[117] Though on Susan Jane's death certificate in 1924, he has been promoted to Station overseer.[118]

After a life of hard work and some vicissitudes, John Gor Tuyan died aged 66 of stomach cancer at New Farm, Brisbane and is buried in Toowong Cemetery.[119]

11

4. cont… Conditions

Conditions

Whether desiring or able to leave or not, the conditions of the pens in which people waiting for a ship were kept do not appear to have been of the best:

The place was a very bad place. The men had nothing but the damp ground, with mats spread upon it, to lie upon. They were all found with trousers, but otherwise naked, and I believe that they had no other clothes to put on. They could not go out if they wished.

*(*Wu-tsang, *servant to the Rev. Mr. Burns, p.46)*

"they appeared to be greatly crowded."

(William Hugh Nurse, acting-mate of Her Majesty's steam-sloop "Salamander", p.52.)

Those taken on board the Tait & Co. ship *Emigrant* seem to have been treated comparatively better:

Q. Have you been ill-treated on board?- A. No, well treated.

*(*Chin Sin, *a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.62.)*

"Q. How were you treated on board?-A., Well treated."

*(*Seang Tsee Sang, *a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.62.)*

"I was well fed and well treated."

*(*Wang He, *a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.63.)*

"Q. Were you well treated on board?-A. Yes, and enough to eat: but when I commenced to work, which I thought I was hired for, one of the sailors beat me."

*(*Hung Tsaon, *a native of Fuhkien province (one of the seven men brought by Mr. Sinclair from the "Emigrant" depôt), p.63.)*

***Image** 22: Model of barque* Emigrant *by James Hall, seaman*

Shift in scope

In addition to these various circumstances of trickery, coercion and confinement, the evidence also implies that the general situation had evolved and intensified in recent years. Most significantly, there appears to have been not only a general increase in the numbers being shipped, but an increase in people with friends and relatives, as opposed to the friendless, being increasingly caught in the recruitment process.

... this is a trade which commenced in the first instance with properly understood bargains agreed to by all parties concerned but has lately been marked by a system of intimidation and abduction; carried to the length in some instances of plunder and forcible detention.

(Inclosure 8 in No. 17. Petition of Chin Sha, *a native of Amoy in the Empire of China, p.94.)*

... there have been established of late, both on shipboard and on shore, depôts where the coolies have lived.

(Rev. William Chalmers Burns, British subject, missionary in China, p.45.)

... these persons thus obtained were the members of families in the community (not as before, friendless persons) ; and that they were shut up so that they could have no communication, even by speech ; and that they were shut up and afterwards carried to foreign countries and there subjected to toil only ended by their death.

(Rev. Burns, reporting on placards in Chinese he had read, p.46.)

Brokers/Crimps

Another aggravating factor seems to have been that the brokers or crimps employed by the merchants to "recruit" men to become contracted workers, while nominally Chinese, were in fact

Cantonese. That is, they were from Canton City (Guangzhou) or at least Guangdong province, where before the First Opium War most foreign merchants would have been based and had connections. For the people of Amoy or Fujian this made them foreigners of a kind.

... they are almost wholly Cantonese men ...
(Dr. Bowering to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, January 5, 1853, p.85.)

The Canton traitor, named A-gan, otherwise Loo-kwang-hung ...
(Inclosure 6 in No. 17. Petition of Kwo Chin She, *a Chinese woman, living at Amoy, p.93.)*

Loo-kwang-hung – originally a menial of the lowest class, has raised himself by his vile and selfish conduct to considerable wealth.
This man came to Amoy as a purchaser of human beings on account of your honourable merchants the Ho-ke store (Messrs. Syme and Co.), with a view to shipping them to England for mercenary purposes.
(Inclosure 5 in No. 17. Petition of Lae Chinse, *a Chinese woman, resident at Amoy, pp.92-93.)*

Loo-kwang-hung, and his nephew loo-chang-piao, Wang-wei-chang, Lin-kin-toan, Lew-shih-new, and others, had entered into combination with the English merchant Syme, for the purpose of kidnapping and selling men in order to enrich themselves ...
(Inclosure 7 in No. 17. Petition of Le Hien, *a Chinese subject, p.94.)*

Plunder or protest?

One interesting feature of the questioning by the Court of Inquiry was the lengths gone to ensure that the "riot" was not dismissed as merely the work of a rabble intent on plunder. This was a view many of the British witnesses took at first, until forced to admit that the actions of the people of Amoy they had in fact witnessed did not uphold such a view. That the protest action was planned to be just that and directed at the commercial viability of the most offending hongs is shown in both the placards announcing the intentions of the protesters and in the activities that actually took place as drawn out in the questioning of witnesses.

Q. How is it they only attacked Mr. Syme's hong, when they could have attacked the other hongs quite as well? (p.58.)

... that they would not buy and sell with the hongs of Syme, Muir and Ca., and Tait and Co.,
(Rev. Burns, p.46.)

The feelings of the rabble seemed to centre towards Mr. Syme's only; and therefore plunder generally could not have been their object.
(Robert Jackson, British merchant, established at Amoy, p.52.)

There were half a-dozen respectable Chinese on Monday and Tuesday who came requesting me to intercede with the merchants, asking them to give two promises in order to satisfy the people. One promise was, that the coolie-broker who had been arrested on Sunday evening, and was said to be then at Mr. Syme's hong, should be delivered up to the Chinese authorities. The other promise was, to secure against any future decoying of men by these brokers. In my conversation

with Mr. Syme on this subject, I stated these requests of the Chinese. I told Mr. Syme, that respectable Chinese assured me that these two promises would be sufficient to satisfy the people. They would then again commence their business as formerly.

(Rev. John V. N. Talmage, American missionary at Amoy, p.69.)

Various meetings were held by the respectable Chinese, at which suggestions were made for the destruction of the English hongs, the attacking the coolie-ships, and various other extreme measures with a view to mitigate the evils of the system; but these were all repudiated, as likely to be injurious to their own interests, because their successes could only be temporary, as in two or three days steamers would be up from Hong Kong, and the rabble, after plundering the foreign hongs, would plunder indiscriminately among the natives.

(Rev. John V. N. Talmage, American missionary at Amoy, p.70.)

The magistrate denied that the people were come to plunder, for that they were unarmed and empty-handed, but that their hatred was directed against the coolie brokers who had done so much harm, and who were ensconced inside the shed (opposite the Ho-ke hong).

(Summary of conversation with marine magistrate. Inclosure 9 in No. a. Mr. Sinclair to Mr. Harvey, Amoy, December 18, 1852, p.77.)

Even the most extreme and violent placard of the people of Amoy (as opposed to the merchants and scholars) shows a narrow range of targets:

The barbarians are ungovernable in the extreme, and their only motive of action is desire for gain. We, the people of the eighteen wards (the town of Amoy), have now agreed that we will have no dispute with the barbarians, but will concert measures for the regulation of our conduct amongst ourselves. From this time, if any persons transact business with the Te-ki and Ho-ki hongs (Tait and CO, and Syme, Nuir & Co), they shall be put to death, their property seized, and their houses destroyed without mercy. None shall be permitted to establish firms for foreign trade. Any brokers who are caught shall not be carried before the authorities, but shall be at once killed. Hereby we express the public indignation, and do not employ words of course. All are warned therefore to abstain from testing the truth of them. If Tait and Syme give up to the authorities, that he may have justice dealt on him, the broker whom one day they carried away, it will then be permitted for them to do business again.

(Appendix (B). Proclamation issued by the Inhabitants of the Eighteen Wards.)

Victims and Compensation

In the end, it was not the British who suffered the most violence, but the people of Amoy, when armed men from a British ship opened fire on the unarmed crowd, killing not only some involved in the protests but also innocent bystanders.

As Zhao responded:

By Imperial Appointment, Zhao, Circuit Intendant of Xing-chhoan and Eng-chhoan (興泉永道), respectfully issues this communication.

Concerning the case of the affray in which five commoners became entangled:

Upon detailed examination at Amoy, together with Your Honour the Consul, it has been verified that the dead are the Chinese subjects Ang He (洪合), Tan Bi (陳姜), Koe Cheng (郭成),

and Li Hô (李蛤). The injured include the Englishman Fa-lam-si *(法覽西, "Vallency") and the Chinese subject Gô Chióng-chúi (吳降水).*

The wounds have each been itemised and entered into the attached forms.

As to those who beat and injured the Englishman, they have already been interrogated and are being dealt with in detail, which is hereby reported. But as to the Englishman who fired the shot—this is still unascertained.

This office, in response to your previous note, has directed careful investigation. It must be determined clearly: was it a foreigner or a local who fired? At that moment in the hong (foreign factory), which person discharged a firearm, thereby killing Ang He, Tan Bi, Koe Cheng, and Li Hô, and injuring Gô Chióng-chúi?

This must all be thoroughly investigated and prosecuted, so that calm may be restored and peace maintained between peoples.

Therefore, I earnestly request Your Honour the Consul to investigate and establish which foreigner in the hong fired the shot, and what his surname is. Please report promptly, so that each side may deal with its own offenders, and avoid confusion. I earnestly request this, again and again.

As for the matter of illicit human trafficking (private kidnapping and sale of people): within China's laws there are clear prohibitions. If such offenders are encountered, the local officials have no choice but to arrest and punish strictly according to the statutes. There is no need to negotiate new regulations on this point.

This communication is respectfully submitted.

Dated: 19th day of the 10th month, 2nd year of the Xian-feng reign (30 November 1852).

Zhao, Circuit Intendant of Xing-chhoan and Eng-chhoan.[120]

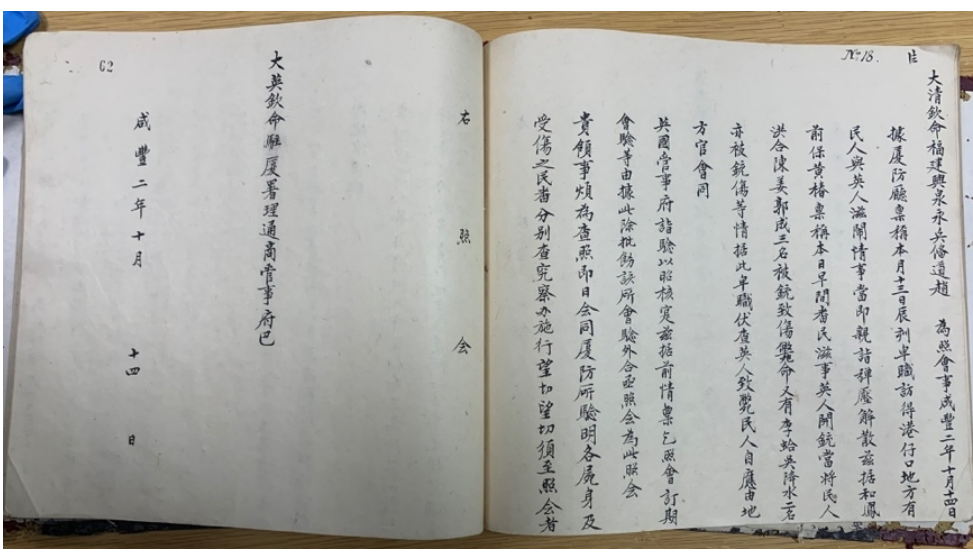


***Image 23:** Part of correspondence between Zhao and Consul*

While the witnesses also gave evidence:

... the friends and relatives of the kidnapped people came together in a mass, and clamorously

demanded their deliverance. Who could have supposed that thereupon Loo-kwang-hung and the others would head a party of English soldiers, ... and fire volleys of musketry?

(Inclosure 6 in No. 17. Petition of Kwo Chin She, *a Chinese woman, living at Amoy, p.93.)*

... whilst others a far way off in the crowd, some in their boats, others on their balconies, and in particular a babe still in arms, had been innocently involved.

(Summary of conversation with marine magistrate. Inclosure 9 in No. 14. Mr. Sinclair to Mr. Harvey, Amoy, December 18, 1852, p.77.)

Lae Ho – engaged in carrying some fuel to a relative, a discharge of fire-arms ... killed four men, her husband included, two iron bullets having entered and pierced his throat and left loin, so that he died instantly.

(Inclosure 5 in No. 17. Petition of Lae Chinse, *a Chinese woman, resident at Amoy, p.93.)*

Kwo Ching, was passing at the back of the Ho-ke hong, when he was struck by shot and killed.

(Inclosure 6 in No. 17. Petition of Kwo Chin She, *a Chinese woman, living at Amoy, p.93.)*

Le-ko, an innocent person, was struck and killed, a ball having entered his left side, passing downwards.

(Inclosure 7 in No. 17. Petition of Le Hien, *a Chinese subject, p.94.)*

Chin-keang - an iron bullet having entered the right side of his back, and struck him dead.

(Inclosure 8 in No. 17. Petition of Chin Sha, *a native of Amoy in the Empire of China, p.94.)*

Despite the deaths of innocent people and the many petitions from their relatives, discussion of compensation between the respective authorities seems to have taken on a bargaining nature as all sought to avoid responsibility rather than actually trying to compensate victims, still less impose any accountability.

... he [Amoy Haefang Marine Magistrate] expressed not only hopes that the traffic in Chinese coolies would be put a stop to, but that the persons who had fired on the people and killed and wounded four or five Chinese, would be punished by the British authorities.

(Summary of conversation with marine magistrate. Inclosure 9 in No. 14. Mr. Sinclair to Mr. Harvey, Amoy, December 18, 1852, p.77.)

He [Amoy Marine Magistrate] said that it was the intention of the Chinese authorities to punish the men who had speared and wounded the English mate, but he also required from the British Government the trial and punishment of the individuals who had killed four or five of their Chinese subjects.

(Summary of conversation with marine magistrate. Inclosure 9 in No. 14 . Mr. Sinclair to Mr. Harvey, Amoy, December 18, 1852, p.77.)

The most severely wounded of the British, Mr Vallancey of the *Australia* also made a claim for compensation:

... by the custom of England he claimed an indemnity of 5000 dollars. The marine magistrate said

it was not the usage in China to pay money as compensation for wounds inflicted, but that by the laws the case should be minutely investigated, and the offenders punished; that they had similar cases of innocent persons having been shot or wounded-persons who were at a distance out of the crowd — one a boatman in his boat, another an unfortunate child and still the Chinese did not claim compensation for the serious injury sustained by them; but he required the trial and punishment of those persons who fired upon the disarmed people and shot four men, wounding two or three others.

... the victims were respectable people of Amoy, and that their relatives were daily harassing him with petitions for redress, and for the punishment of the offenders ...

(Inclosure 10 in No. 14. Account of the Interview at the Marine Magistrate's on the 14th instant, p.78.)

In the end only the small amount of money from the fines levied on Syme and his assistant was provided as compensation:

I have received four several applications from the widow, the mother, and brothers of four persons who were shot by the marines ... and who are stated to have taken no part in the disturbances.

I have instructed Mr. Backhouse ... to distribute the amount of the fines levied on Messrs. Syme and Cornabe (being 220 dollars) among the families of the sufferers.

(Dr. Bowring to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, January 6, 1853, p.86.)

Image 24: *Syme's house in Edinburgh*

Consequences

The direct consequence of the so-called Amoy Riots was to end Amoy as a major source of contracted labour. Before these disturbances high hopes had been held for a great increase in this form of trade:

> *Extensive charters have been entered into to bring back coolies from Amoy to Australia, San Francisco, and Havanna. It is said that the engagements amount to upwards of 50,000 souls.*[121]

Instead, Syme ceased engaging in the trade and Tait & Co. moved its operations outside the Treaty Port system and hence away from the oversight of British Consuls and their moral judgements:

> *Those persons have brought disgrace on the British name, and have endangered British interests in China.*
>
> *(The Earl of Clarendon to Sir George Bonham, Foreign Office, February 24, 1853, p.83.)*

> *Since the disturbances at Amoy, Namoa, another opium station, has furnished two cargoes of coolies, one for Demerara and the other for Australia ...*
>
> *(Dr. Bowering to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, January 5, 1853, p.83.)*

> *Mr. Tait, who is the largest shipper of coolies from Amoy, and the Consul for several nations, has erected barracoons on the Chinese continent at Swa-Tow, near Namoa, and that he is collecting coolies there.*
>
> *(Dr. Bowering to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, January 10, 1853, p.95.)*

This would seem to be a slight consequence generated by these events, though it could be added that they also encouraged the slow evolution of increased regulation by the British government. This regulation included the Passenger Acts that did ensure shipping, through Hong Kong at least, was more humane. Unfortunately, Macau and other non-British ports continued to allow for less humane methods well into the 19th century.

The evidence would seem to indicate that the Amoy men came from a variety of backgrounds, locations and circumstances. They might be illiterate peasants, shoemakers or from relatively well off families and able to read and write. They might have been from Amoy itself or any number of districts and villages within walking distance or from the port of Quanzhou to the north. They might have been kidnapped, tricked or perhaps so desperate to avoid poverty or other circumstances than the prospect of five years in a far-off place was not undesirable. Certainly, the wide variety of outcomes for the Amoy men in the years that followed in the Australian colonies supports this wide range of origins.

Having seen some of the circumstance and conditions under which the Amoy men were recruited. The next chapter will examine the working and general social circumstances of the men on arrival in the Colony of NSW, beginning with the voyage from Amoy to the Colony of NSW.

12

Vignette VI - John Tan Kee

Sister Mary Stanislaus daughter of John Tan Kee.

Tankey family collection, Museum of Chinese Australian History, Melbourne.

John Tan Kee (1828 - 1902) labourer, gold digger, fruiterer, shopkeeper.[122] Arriving in Sydney in 1851 where he remained to work, John Tan Kee married relatively quickly in 1854. This would appear to have been even before his contract had expired. John married Catherine Wells at St Mary's, Sydney and his children were brought up Catholic. So much so, that one daughter Elizabeth became a Sister of St. Joseph known as Sister Mary Stanislaus.

In 1862 the family which by then included a son William Charles moved to Carcoar where John Tan Kee (the family name evolved into Tankey) lived for the rest of his life. John became naturalized in 1876 and continued to raise his family before dying in 1902. By the 1980s his descendants numbered over 140.

John Tankey's passing was well noted by his community and his obituary provides a clear image of a well-liked and generous man:

> *It was a privilege to know, and be in daily touch, with such a man. ... Always urbane and courteous, it was a pleasure to meet and converse with him. As a citizen, he was foremost to assist, as far as his means would permit, in any necessary or deserving cause. Physical assistance was always rendered by him in case of fire, accident, etc. ... The memory of his kindly face and friendly greeting will long remain.*[123]

13

5. This outlandish description of labourers

— life in NSW

Conditions of travel

Whether free, tricked or kidnapped, all the men contracted to go to the Colony of New South Wales were subject to the conditions of mid-19th century travel—travel by ship at that time being rough in even the best of circumstances. The dangers of overcrowded and poorly provisioned ships were well known. British vessels at the time were legally required to limit passengers' numbers based on their size, as well as to carry a doctor and sufficient provisions per person. Deaths were recorded, and these records provide clues to the pronounced variation in conditions and circumstances that could occur on each voyage. As mentioned previously, 185 deaths were recorded among the 25 ship voyages to NSW. However, only two ships were responsible for 103 of these deaths—the *General Palmer* had 70 deaths in 1852, and the *Spartan* 33 in 1853. Eight ships recorded no deaths at all, and the rest ranged from 1 to 13 deaths.[124]

The *Eleanor Lancaster* brought out some 240 men in early 1852.[125] This voyage is rare in that we have an eyewitness account that gives us a glimpse into what the trip from Amoy to Australia might have been like for these men.[126] This account is to be found in the diary kept by W. D. P. Swain who was hired as the doctor on board for the passage:

> *The evenings are now generally fine tho a heavy dew falls and the Coolies amuse themselves by singing acting playing-gymnastics almost every night – They are very quiet and tractable and thank God there has as yet been little serious illness among them.* [127]

Swain goes on to mention details such as having 'buried' a coolie, fearing a panic at the boats had the ship struck a reef, and witnessing many broken shins during rough seas. He also notes that he feared smallpox, though it proved to be something else, before giving a suggestive account of the rescue of a man who had jumped overboard:

> *Yesterday afternoon I was down in the half-deck with old chips* [the ships carpenter] *who is extremely ill, and suddenly heard a rumbling growl on deck wh increased – I xx up thinking it was a rising among the Chinese ; but when I got up found the ship all aback wearing round – and looking after? Saw a chinaman overboard and a wadadeck tap sawn in half beside him. He had jumped overboard in a fit of despondency because he was discontented. The quarter boat was immediately lowered and manned – and after a few minutes pull got him again tho very much exhausted – Fortunately for him he had remittent? fever, or he would have been soundly flogged* – [128]

Even after arrival in NSW death was a common occurrence and Swain, with less than Hippocratic concern, states:

> *We have lost five Coolies and these are xx xx. I am most anxious to get out of my hands as soon as possible – I think the Capt will be able to get rid of most of them here [Newcastle] for there have already been numerous applications.*[129]

After Newcastle the *Eleanor Lancaster* continued and on:

> *April 13th Weighed anchor & set sail today for Sydney. Since we have been here four Coolies have died, and the sick ones were placed in a hired row of buildings on the North Shore by Capt Lodge.*[130]

Swain's leap to the conclusion that the noise he heard was a "rising among the Chinese" was not entirely unreasonable. Such incidents had befallen ships before and would do so again after Swain's voyage. The *Spartan* which was the last ship to take recruited men from Amoy to NSW in late 1852 was subject to an attempted mutiny. Though the most well-known and successful mutiny was that aboard the *Robert Bowne*, an American ship. The captain of the *Spartan* denied all responsibility, and published European accounts of the *Spartan* mutiny stress the lack of possible reason for their behaviour on the part of the Chinese passengers:

> *The terms of their agreement were signed on board the vessel, and from the eagerness evinced by all to sign, each before the other, there can be no doubt that they were sufficiently alive to their interests and understood the nature of their agreement.*[131]

> *The men are stated to have been treated kindly during the voyage and allowed as much liberty as the size of the vessel would admit of. They had more rice than they could consume ...*[132]

Given the lack of a Chinese perspective and the state of affairs in Amoy as the *Spartan* was being loaded, these accounts cannot be taken at face value. In any case, they strongly contrast accounts of a similar occurrence the year before on board the U.S. ship *Robert Bowne*. A thorough investigation of this mutiny resulted in its captain being condemned for mistreatment of his passengers. A probable deception as to their real destination—Peru and not California in the case of the *Robert Bowne*—was also likely a contributing factor to the mutiny.[133] John Bowring gave his general opinion as:

> *I believe there are few instances in which the commanders have not been blameworthy in a very high degree, their conduct to the coolies having been most cruel and despotic.*[134]

Despite the evidence of harsh treatment on the *Robert Bowne* and possibly the *Spartan*, there is also evidence of exertions to ameliorate such behaviour, at least on the *Eleanor Lancaster*. The effort of the ship to save a man overboard, as described by Swain above, is one such, and another is:

> *Manslaughter.-The Attorney-General, we are informed, has determined to file a bill in the case against the first and second officers of the* Ganges, *for having caused the death of a Chinaman during the voyage from Amoy to Sydney.*-Empire.[135]

This case provides details of violence with witness evidence of the continued beating of a tied man

charged with theft. The man is not named in the committal proceedings, and is always simply referred to as "the Chinaman".[136] A further instance of the contradictory nature of attitudes to violence and its consequences is that the main evidence is provided by John Quigley. Quigley had himself been "confined, in irons, in the water-closet, ... for 83 days, on a charge of having thrown one of the Coolies overboard ... ." This charge, however, was not followed up.[137] It was only in the Supreme Court trial that the deceased was granted a name—Ti Ko.[138] The final result was that the two charged with Ti Ko's death were found guilty of "common assault" rather than manslaughter. This outcome was due to the tied and beaten man having had an "accidental fall" off the poop deck and this was considered the cause of his death.[139]

Conditions of work

Having been recruited, confined in barracoons, and having survived a voyage of three months or longer, the men and boys from Amoy finally arrived in the Colony of New South Wales to take up work. The wide variation in recruitment conditions and treatment observed at Amoy and aboard the ships continued to be evident as these men began to live and work in the colony.

Image 25: *Map of the Colony of NSW, 1850*

The first and foremost condition was the terms of their contracts. The men arrived with contracts that were sold on to employers in the colony to work as shepherds and in other roles. To who and at what work was not something the men themselves had any control over. Some of the ships arrived in Sydney, some Newcastle or Maryborough and some in Melbourne.[140] When the *Eleanor Lancaster* arrived in Sydney from Swatow with 255 Chinese immigrants described as "fine young healthy agricultural labourers", it was decided to send them on to Newcastle where it was felt the demand for their services would be greater.[141] That is, where people would be willing to buy their five-year contracts.

The legally enforceable bilingual contracts of the men from Amoy provide the first substantial amount of written Chinese in Australia.[142] These contracts were drawn up by the British merchants in Amoy employing British law as determined by the Treaty of Nanjing. The Chinese text is therefore a translation of the English terms and conditions. Apart from the five-year limit imposed by the NSW *Master and Servants Act*, the contracts also stipulated the wages per year and the amount of rations and clothing that would be supplied. Nothing was said about the type of work or the conditions under which such work might be done.

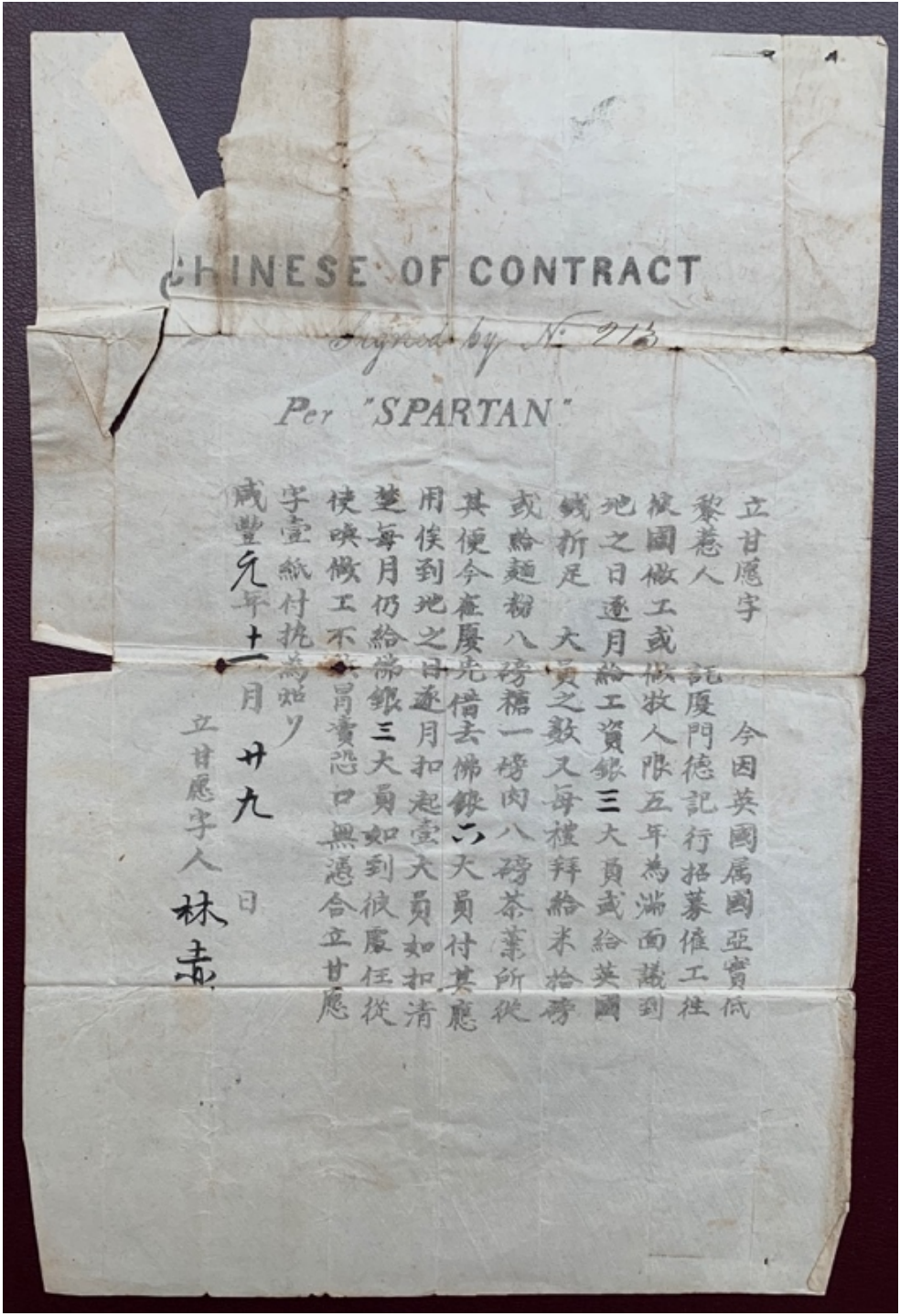


Image 26: *Contract signed by those aboard the* Spartan, *11 October, 1851.*

Transcript

立甘願字 今因英國屬國亞實低
黎惹人，託廈門德記行招募僱工，往
彼國做工，或做牧人，限五年為滿。面議到
地之日，逐月給工資銀三大員，或約英國
錢折足大員之數。又每禮拜給米拾磅，
或給麵粉八磅，糖一磅，肉八磅，茶葉所從
其便。今在廈借去佛銀六大員，付其廳
用，俟到地之日，逐月扣起壹大員，如扣清
楚，每月仍給佛銀三大員。到彼處任從
使喚做工，不敢冒臺，恐口無憑，合立甘愿
字壹紙，付執為憑據。
咸豐元年十一月廿九日
立甘願字人：林志[143]

Translation[144]

Letter of Voluntary Agreement: Now, because the British dependency of Australia has commissioned the Tait & Co. firm in Amoy to recruit and hire labourers to travel to that country to work, either as shepherds or for general labour, for a term of five years. It is mutually agreed that from the day of arrival at the destination, the monthly wage shall be three silver dollars, or the equivalent value in British currency. Furthermore, a weekly ration shall be provided consisting of ten pounds of rice or eight pounds of flour, one pound of sugar, eight pounds of meat, and tea leaves as required. I have now borrowed six silver dollars in Amoy to be paid for use, and it is agreed that starting from the day of arrival, one silver dollar shall be deducted from my wages each month; once the debt is cleared, I shall again receive the full three silver dollars per month. Upon arrival at said location, I shall be subject to all assignments and labour and shall not dare to be neglectful; as verbal agreements are without proof, this written document of voluntary labour is established in one copy to be held as [evidence].

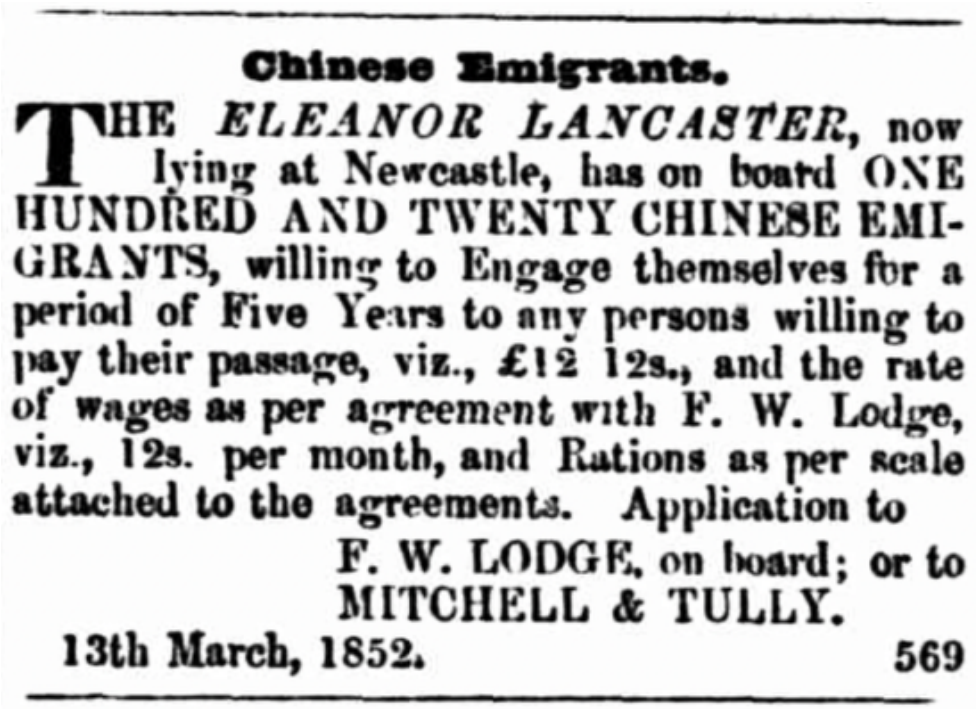
The 29th day of the 11th month in the 1st year of the Xianfeng reign.
[21st December, 1851].
The person establishing this voluntary agreement: Lin Zhi

Notes

* 甘願字 *"Letter of Voluntary Agreement"*, not "contract," reflects Qing legal usage.
* 亞士低黎惹 = phonetic for Australia.
* 德記行 = Tok Kee Hong (Tait & Co.).
* 大員 = "dollar" (Mexican or Spanish pieces of eight, or Straits dollar).

There were other contracts such as that provided by Paul Pax, seemingly based on those of Robert Jackson, in which the agreement was to work as either as a "shepherd, farm and general servant, and labourer" for "five years, to commence from the date of the arrival". Wages were also "three dollars per month", "paid in dollars, or in sterling British money at the exchange of four shillings per dollar".[145] The employer was similarly to provide "weekly rations, namely: 8 lbs. flour, or 10 lbs. rice at option ; 8 lbs. meat ; 2 ozs. of tea". Any money already advanced (perhaps paid to

family or for debts incurred for clothing or food) were to be repaid via a monthly deduction.[146] This rate of 12s per month plus rations is confirmed in an advertisement for "Chinese Emigrants" for the men who came on the *Eleanor Lancaster* in 1852.[147]



Chinese Emigrants.

THE *ELEANOR LANCASTER*, now lying at Newcastle, has on board ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY CHINESE EMIGRANTS, willing to Engage themselves for a period of Five Years to any persons willing to pay their passage, viz., £12 12s., and the rate of wages as per agreement with F. W. Lodge, viz., 12s. per month, and Rations as per scale attached to the agreements. Application to

F. W. LODGE, on board; or to
MITCHELL & TULLY.

13th March, 1852. 569

Image 27: Eleanor Lancaster *advertisement*

Contractual conditions may have worsened over time. In advertisements for the first arrivals from Amoy on the *Nimrod* the starting date of the five years is declared to be from "thirty days after arrival"; their wages "at £6 per annum"; plus "clothing, and a ration of 10lbs. flour. 10lbs. meat, 1/4lb. tea, and 1lb. sugar". The tea and sugar ration is much more generous than that mentioned by Paul Pax. For a worker employed under these conditions the employer was expected to pay the "£1 12s. 0d. advanced each man" (though this was to be deducted from wages), and the passage money of £12, plus another fee of "from £2 to £5 each". This was calculated to make "the man's hire about £11 per annum or less".[148]

Relative value

For a worker in Amoy these rates of pay would not have looked particularly high, though regular pay plus rations would have been attractive. According to one report on local Amoy rates of earnings:

> *The average wages of all labour at Amoy are very low, and there is not much variation between the rates paid for different kinds, skilled and unskilled. From eighty to one hundred cash is the daily hire of an able-bodied man. The highest of these amounts is about equal to 4d. Double these sums is the wage of artizans, such as masons, carpenters, tailors shoemakers, &c. A first-class*

agricultural labourer is on the footing of a skilled craftsman, and receives 160 cash, or 6d. per diem ...[149]

Six pence per day in Amoy was around 15 shilling per month while three dollars per month was only 12 shillings in NSW. However, being paid every day in Amoy could not be assumed and rations and slops (clothing) would have added to the recompense in NSW. Overall, an Amoy man probably thought himself well off in comparison to home. Of course, once in the colonies these men would have soon realised that rates that were attractive by Amoy standards, nevertheless meant they were paid much less than local workers.

***Image 28:** 1 Mexican dollar = 4 shillings*

Aside from cash payments, the provision of clothing and rations was always part of contracts and many disputes revolved around these aspects. Ready-made, inexpensive and often ill-fitting articles of clothing were referred to as "slops" (hence sloppy). Darnell provides some accounts from stations listing the articles provided to some of their Amoy workers, including purchased by them as well as under contract. An Amoy man named Eats working at Maryland near present day

Stanthorpe acquired boots, Fancy trousers, and a Pea Coat, along with tobacco, soap and calico.[150] An interesting advertisement for Station supplies including slops from 1854, lists such items as Shepherds' coats, Canvas trousers, Yarn shirts and California hats. The advertisement ends with the line – "Low priced slops for Chinese, Coolies, &c."[151]

Reactions to workers – exiles or Chinamen

After wages, the most notable aspect of the conditions the Amoy men faced as workers was the reactions of those around them. Broadly speaking, there were two types of responses. One reaction came from landowners and squatters, who hoped to benefit from this new labour force and were either pleased or disappointed with the result. The other response was from the broader community, who often felt threatened, either by the competition for wages or the arrival of people from what they saw as an alien culture, or both.

As a modern researcher has put it:

> *In 1847 the first group of indentured Chinese labourers arrived in the port of Sydney as part of what over the following six years was to become a systematic trade. The reactions within colonial society prompted by this trade were in the main negative, and ranged from outright admonition of the importers and employers for being involved in what was termed nothing less than a covert slave trade, to a qualified acceptance of the trade as the only measure available to those employers, specifically the squatters, in need of labourers and shepherds.*[152]

By 1850, the squatters in the Darling Downs considered themselves desperate for workers – or at least workers they did not need to pay more than what they considered "within reasonable bounds". At a meeting in Ipswich the question was put as a choice between "exiles or Chinamen", that is, between a renewal of convict transportation or the importation of contracted labour from Amoy.[153]

Squatter reaction

Generally, the squatters and others who employed the Amoy men seem to have had little to complain of, not that this stopped individuals from this class complaining. As was recognised at the time:

> *The importation of indentured Chinese labourers was not a reaction to the need to replace labourers who had fled to the fields. The indentured Chinese were already in place, as recognised and articulated by a contemporary: the arrival of the Chinese in the district at the critical period that they did, was in a great measure the salvation of the squatting interest, which without the presence of these people would have been, if not utterly ruined, at least vastly deteriorated ... The employment of this outlandish description of labourers therefore has been of more service to the colony than has heretofore been allowed.*[154]

Early reports were mixed with one editor declaring that: "We have no hesitation in saying that it has not had the fair trial we hoped for." This was blamed on an absence of patience, justice, and sense of duty on the part of employers. Though one employer reported that his experience of the value of the workers was that "these men have answered beyond my most sanguine expectation".[155] A later report from Murrurundi in 1854 also focused on the need for the employer to show care in dealing with the Amoy men. The property owner who had forty Amoy men felt:

"that they were peaceful, attentive to their duties, trustworthy, and every way valuable servants." The writer considered this was due to his patience and that: "One angry word spoken to them, though ever so much deserved, may cost him his life."[156]

Some squatters appeared to be capable of learning from their mistakes or were at least forced by the predictable resistance to mistreatment to adapt. When F. Vigne advertised for a "Sheep Overseer" for his 12,000 sheep he included the condition "some experience with Chinamen preferred".[157]

Image 29: *Shepherd on alert at a sentry box*

Aboriginal reaction

Usually, the Indigenous people of the colonies are only mentioned in terms of attacks on Amoy shepherds. However, it should be remembered just how recent the expropriation of their land was and in some areas was still going on. The Amoy men can be said therefore to have been participants in this expropriation. This was especially that case in the stations around Gayndah which in 1848 were technically outside the Colony of NSW. Armed and driving sheep, some of these men from the Qing Empire found themselves on a hostile frontier.[158]

Image 30: *The Avengers* [The title is not being ironic]

Thus, attacks by local Indigenous people were a work hazard probably not mentioned on embarkation at Amoy. Such an attack is recorded by the Christmas Creek Memorial in southern Queensland.[159]

***Image 31:** Memorial at Christmas Creek*

A report from April 1852 has two shepherds defending against an attack that seems to have been directed at their sheep, ten being killed.[160] It is not mentioned that the shepherds in this case were Amoy men but it certainly highlights the risk all shepherds took at this time. Two months later two Chinese shepherds were nearly killed in an attack that saw their blankets stolen.[161] And in a large-scale attack in the Burnett district, which also saw the property owner speared to death,

two Chinese shepherds were killed.[162] While at Maryborough it was reported that: "A Chinaman, while on his way down to that place, was met by some savages, and cruelly killed."[163] Darnell mentions several cases in which Amoy men, accused of absconding—or, in one instance, of stealing a shotgun—claimed that fear of attack by Aborigines was their motive.

Reactions of the wider community

Paul Pax was obviously on the side of those who greatly favoured the importation of the kind of worker the Amoy men represented. The fact that he and his backers felt it necessary to go into print to explain why all was good hints however that not all believed this to be the case. By 1852 agitation against the importation of Chinese labourers had grown. Arguments made allusions to the slavery like conditions of the contracts, the kind of society people wished to have, and the apparent unsuitability of Chinese people to that end. Comparisons with convict labour and the very ill treatment the Chinese workers were subjected to served as a reminder that this was not the kind of labour the now "free" colonists wished to compete with.[164]

The debate over contract labourers plainly favoured not just free immigration – that is those not under contracts – but that such immigrants should be from Britain, thus, "a set of heartless flesh dealers had sent vessels to China to bring to this colony a class of people who neither understood our language, our laws, our manners, or our customs, and whose introduction must operate as an absolute bar to a free immigration of our own countrymen."[165]

Accordingly, these first Chinese arrivals in any number to Australia found themselves the centre of a debate about free and unfree labour. This was a debate that inevitably brought in questions of race and culture. In the recent aftermath of China's defeat in the First Opium War, this all the more readily saw all Chinese people categorised as slaves and by extension "unfair" competition to (white) labour. This would impact not only the men from Amoy but also those who began to arrive in increasing numbers in the early 1850s. This was the beginning of the gold rush which brought men from Guangdong (Cantonese speakers mainly), whose "free" nature was to be questioned.[166]

Worker treatment & resistance

The Squattocracy, which at this time dominated government, continued to use this labour in preference to more expensive "free" labour when they could. The Amoy men were soon spread from what not long afterwards became southern Queensland to Victoria and throughout NSW in between. Many homesteads and squatter runs employed them including the Booubyjan Homestead in southern Queensland, the Australian Agricultural Company in the Hunter Valley and Stroud, and the Berry Estate on the NSW south coast. The most concentrated area was the Darling Downs of what became southern Queensland and there was "a large Chinese population settled at Gayndah".[167] While looking after sheep in the then fenceless landscape seems to have been the main employment, other jobs ranging from road and fence making to cooking were also performed.[168]

Unfortunately, some did not even make it as far as this employment. Tang Ki, for example, arrived in Sydney after a voyage from Amoy of 133 days during which he had been sick most of the time. He "was one of eight men forwarded by Flower, Salting, and Co., of Sydney, by a bullock dray driven by one Lennon, who was to get £20 for bringing them up the country, and for provisioning them on the road". They were going to "Dr. Nicholson's Estate, at Lake George". Tang Ki, despite being assisted as much as possible and provided with food never recovered and

died before even arriving at his place of work. His fellow contracted workers gave evidence at the inquest that they "had not too much nor too little to eat". Tuan Zing acted as interpreter.[169]

For those that did take up shepherding, the occupation was a lonely one and, it seems, a dangerous one, as sheep ranged freely in the period before extensive fencing. One observer felt sending these men into the bush cruel and commented on:

> *... the folly and injustice of introducing, these unhappy foreigners to situations where they cannot make known their grievances, or escape from galling incitements to crime.*[170]

This was after four Amoy men at a property near Murrurundi had beaten their Amoy overseer nearly to death. The same writer also reported on two Amoy men who, upon arrival at their place of employment at Scone, one committed suicide and the other absconded.[171]

Death by suicide, accidental drowning and snake bite are all recorded in the colonial inquests of Amoy men during their contract periods. From a record of these inquests can be seen a varied list of deaths:[172]

Aba – died of snake bite, 1853

Assing was drowned on the Darling Downs in about March 1850

De Ung, a Chinese man, died of 'apoplexy' in about October 1850 on the Darling Downs.

Eu (or En), a Chinese man, drowned in the Logan River in about February 1850. An inquest was held into his death at Logan River on 4 February. The coroner delivered a verdict of 'Accidentally drowned'. At least 4-5 more drownings – or suicides?

Son Son, a Chinese man, died by suicide in the Ipswich area in about March 1853. An inquest was held in Ipswich on 8 March with John Paxton finding that Son Son 'Poisoned himself Felodese'. 'Felo de se' being a Latin term for an unlawful act of suicide.

Tookseen, a Chinese man, died in about October 1851 in Gayndah. An inquest, held by R. J. Wilkins on 6 October 1851, found that Tookseen died by suicide.

Uk Khi, a Chinese man, died in the Maryborough region in about December 1853. An inquest was held in Maryborough on 24 December delivering a verdict of accidental drowning.

Deaths from mishap or self-inflicted aside, as workers the men from Amoy were well received and appreciated, though as with their experiences of the voyages by ship, circumstances varied greatly. Certainly, they were prepared to challenge their employers when treated unfairly and a surprisingly high number of court cases are recorded as a result. In fact, the Court House at Gayndah was considered by one observer as the centre of "Gayndah Court house Fever" due to the number of cases related to the Amoy men who the writer thought used the opportunity of contract disputes to avoid work.[173] Though a more serious remark considers that as there "was a large Chinese population settled at Gayndah" we are "bound to protect those people".[174]

Certainly, the all too common assumption that the men from Amoy were hapless victims of ill-treatment is a false one. While instances of ill-treatment are plentiful, so are examples of resisting such treatment ranging from running away to mounting court cases and in at least one case "they all struck work". This early instance of a strike occurred near Gayndah in 1852 and was reputedly the result of their being told Europeans received £1 per week to their four dollars per month. That is, one quarter the wage. "Acting upon this, they all struck work, and left their sheep in the hurdles for a whole day." [175] A similar case of having "struck work" took place a few months earlier among the reported eighty Amoy men employed by the Australian Agricultural Company at

Stroud. Though here the issue seems to have been a case of mistreatment.[176]

14

Vignette VII - John Chay

Helen, one of John Chay's many children

John Chay

Not much is known about John Chay except that he was possibly among those Amoy men known to have worked on the Wetheron estate of William Humphreys.[177] Living in Queensland he was able to be naturalized as early as 1860.[178] John married Jane Craig in 1860 and they had at least five children. John however died in 1871, meaning Jane must have raised most of their young children alone.

More is known of his daughter Helen who lived to a good age and had numerous descendants

herself.[179] Two of her sons served in the AIF and one was wounded at Gallipoli. Another grandson of John Chay also served in France making at least three of his grandchildren to do so.

15

5. cont… Treatment

The Treatment of Chinese Workers at Boonara Station

The events at Boonara Station in the mid-1850s provide stark evidence of the brutality sometimes inflicted on Chinese indentured labourers and their potential responses. The employer, Bertel Johannes Bertelson, openly admitted to practices that amounted to torture and systemic abuse. Most notoriously, Bertelson testified in court that he maintained a "private lock-up" for his Chinese shepherds:

> *… a Chinese tied upright in a little meat safe, as he described it, by the throat, arms, and legs, and without food or water for two or three days and nights.*[180]

He insisted this was "an efficacious mode of discipline upon stations where Chinese are employed." This admission was corroborated by further evidence of corporal punishment. One labourer newly arrived from Boonara was observed to be "all marked, from head to foot, with a stock-whip." Bertelson remarked this was "very likely, as they were in the habit of fighting together," but his neighbour dismissed this thin attempt to deny his vicious treatment.

The abuse provoked an equally violent response. On 6 July 1852, two of Bertelson's Chinese servants, Tan Choo and Ki Tiam, attacked him at his house after a dispute over rations and a dog. Bertelson's testimony recorded that Ki Tiam concealed "a bar of iron in the sleeve of a great coat," with which he "struck him across the nose… breaking the bone of the nose, and felling him to the ground almost in a state of insensibility." While Bertelson lay on the floor, Tan Choo delivered further blows with a garden hoe, declaring "he is *bong*" and "no more," which the witness understood to mean they believed him dead.[181]

The conflict quickly escalated beyond this incident. Contemporary reports noted that Bertelson "brought up four Chinese for an assault," while local newspapers portrayed the Chinese as a collective threat, "coming up to his head station" at night in numbers. These accounts emphasised the supposed difficulty of "managing them," implicitly excusing the harsh measures taken against them.

Rumours of a broader revolt followed. Reports claimed that Bertelson's workers had threatened to "burn the head station house down," and that Mrs. Bertelson sat in fear with "four double-barrelled guns loaded, in the parlour, ready for action."

In an interesting reversal on the fear of attack by Indigenous people, the house of Bertelson was saved from being burnt down by the local Aboriginal people camping all around it.[182] How this protective encampment came about is not specified but seems to have been the work of Mrs Bertelson who perhaps treated the local Indigenous people better than her husband treated his Chinese workers.

Other accounts stated that Chinese in the district were "now in the lock-up... waiting to obtain or receive justice," with several more charged with absconding or sheep-stealing. Eventually Bertelson, perhaps due to a lack of sympathy from fellow squatters, sold off his contracts with the Amoy men to others who conceivably used different means of treating their workers.[183]

Communication difficulties

Even without ill-treatment, communication was often a problem. This was not always simply due to lack of English but rather lack of common ground or perhaps even deliberate misinformation. The case of Kang is revealing. Kang was accused of absconding and gave as his defence "in tolerably intelligible English", that he had not been paid the 12 shillings a month as agreed. Though he had been given various articles of clothing – a common arrangement with workers and as we have seen always mentioned in the contracts. The court observer stated, as Kang was sentenced to "three months hard labour on the public works at Newcastle breakwater", that Kang didn't understand that the clothing costs were deducted from the 12 shillings. In court Kang threatened his employer—"I'll shoot you"—and was charged and bound over to keep the peace on this charge also.[184]

That Kang had not had such deductions explained to him is suspicious. This is because, in addition to his tolerable English, Kang's employer, a man named "Mr. T. L. M. Prior, of the Logan River", used a man named Tinko—described as a "baptised Chinaman"—to deal with his contractors.[185] This same Tinko was soon after accused of threatening a witness despite being strongly supported by Price.[186]

The case of Bar Teong is similar in that it shows how absconding was perhaps the only resort to employers failing to fulfil the contracts. His "master", a Dr Barton of the Brisbane Hospital argued that as Bar Teong "had been furnished with clothes frequently" he had no need of the money that he claimed he was keeping in hand. The Magistrates felt that "the probable cause of prisoner's discontent was not being paid monthly, as he then stated in court". On this occasion the magistrates insisted that the letter of the contract should be enforced and Bar Teong was discharged.[187]

Despite this case of finding in favour of the "Servant" over the "Master", the law in general saw "absconding" as a crime. Nevertheless, this simple and effective means of protesting poor conditions or a breach of contract was common as the numerous advertisements for rewards demonstrate.[188] As also do the numerous courts cases, amounting to a "fever" at Gayndah (see above).

NOTICE TO CONSTABLES.

ONE POUND Reward. — Absconded from the service of MR. SIMON SCOTT, Toromeo, on the 14th inst. DAME IEONG, a native of Amoy, about twenty years of age, light complexion, speaks a little English and understands it well All parties are hereby cautioned from harbouring or employing, the said Dame Ieong. The above reward of One Pound, will be paid to any Constable on lodging him in any of her Majesty's Lock up's. He was last seen near Colentore on his way to Brisbane. A warrant has been granted for his apprehension.

JOHN MURRAY.

Taromeo.
15th Jan. 1852.

£2 REWARD.

TO CONSTABLES AND OTHERS.

WHEREAS Achay, a native of China, has absconded from my service, the above Reward will be paid to any one lodging him in the lockup, a warrant having been granted for his apprehension. Supposed to have gone towards New England.

Parties are hereby cautioned against hiring or harbouring the said Achay.

J. M. ANDREW.

Jondaryan, 16th December, 1850.

Image 32: Absconding rewards were numerous[189]

Independent

Without falling into parallel stereotyping, the Amoy men seem to have been an independent lot and were often involved in fights and accused of crimes. At one station near Carcoar, NSW owned by William Lawson, a group formed as the result of one of their number having been assaulted. The rather breathless account described after having "armed themselves with long sharp-pointed poles, and some of them with knives, they arranged themselves in something like military order". Despite this "by dint of mingled threats and persuasions they were prevailed upon to withdraw".[190] Reliant on European accounts such as this means we have little idea as to what caused this aggression or how defensive or justified it may have been.

Image 33: William Lawson – best known for his Blue Mts crossing – was also an employer of Amoy men on contracts.

An incident which took place in central NSW and resulted in the death of Richard Keith Grainger, whose throat was cut, provides a clearer idea of motivation. The trial evidence given by Henry Lee, who was his overseer, was that Grainger was in the habit of getting drunk and "beating and kicking" the five Amoy men he had in his service. Four of the five—Tsing Tsoon, Tah Sick, Hin Tick and Ly Tick were put on trial and the other—Sing Sing—turned "approver" and gave evidence against his fellows. The judge's summation was very even handed as to the possibilities of self-defence and the men were convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to hard labour on the roads for twelve months.[191]

Not all provocation resulted in a killing. By his own evidence one prominent landowner and employer of Amoy men, W. C. Wentworth had not paid the money he owed four men—Yap Tian, Nybong, Tsin Jin Ho, and Yap Ho. Yap Ho, when sentenced to two months gaol, "screamed, kicked, swore, bit"—having been sentenced in the absence of an interpreter according to the account.[192] Wentworth had great difficulty keeping his Chinese workers, who would run off or suffer gaol time rather than be treated poorly by him.

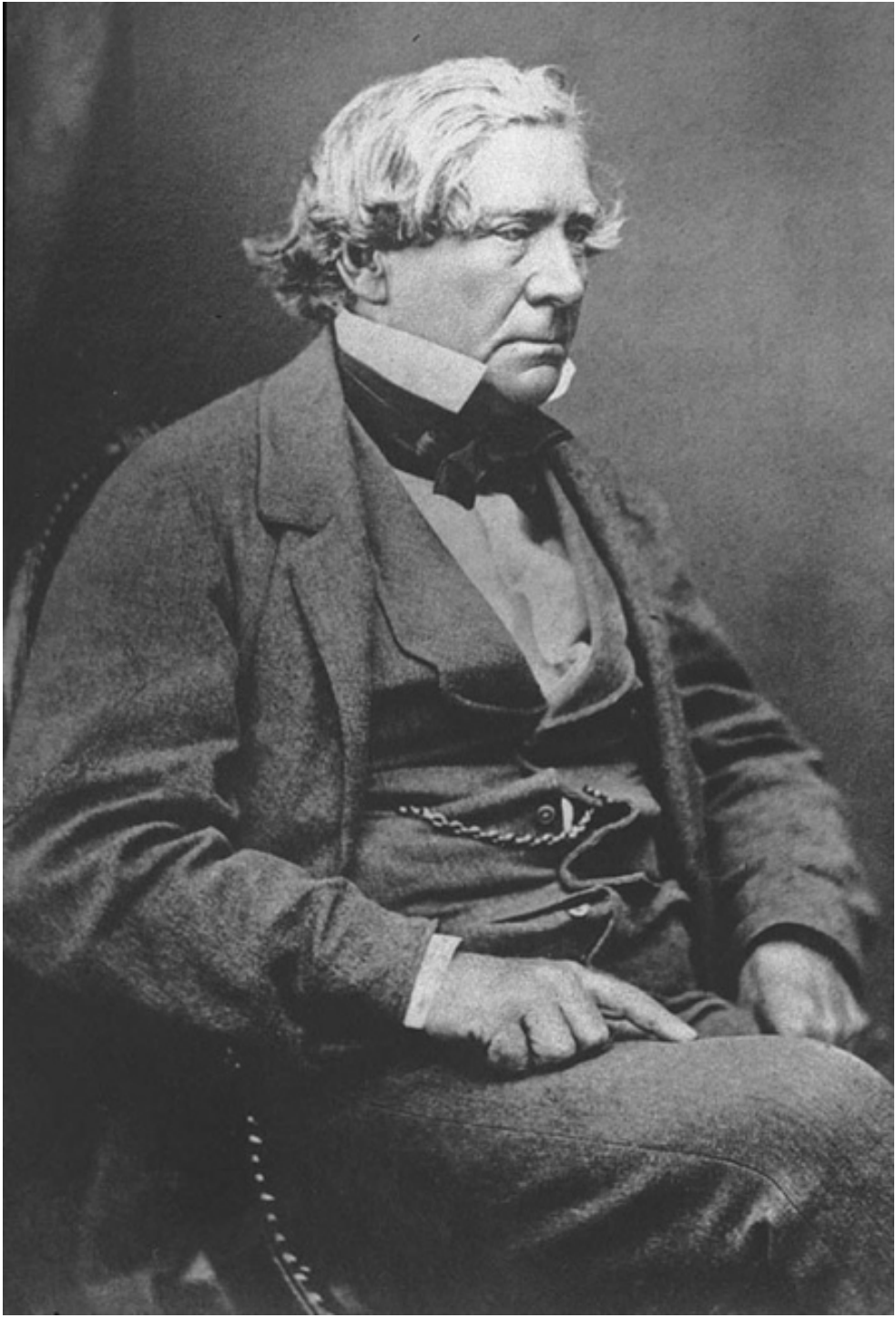


Image 34: W. C. Wentworth — another prominent white man in Australian history not so well known for his treatment of Amoy men under contract to him.

It was a tough life and as one report observed around this time:

> *It is the intolerable cruelty that is exercised upon the Chinese labourers in this colony that causes them so very frequently to revolt and commit many outrages that might otherwise have been avoided.*[193]

The report of a NSW Parliamentary committee into "Asiatic Labour" concluded:

> *It is admitted on all hands that the experiment of Chinese has disappointed the expectations of those who at one time strongly advocated their introduction ...*[194]

When the "experiment" of importing Chinese labour was officially declared a failure, a self-serving lack of obedience was reported to be one factor.[195]

Fighting with each other

This apparent lack of docility is also demonstrated through another common reason many Amoy men found themselves in court, namely fighting with each other. In what is likely the first piece of Chinese Australian literature (broadly defined), a man accused of murder of a fellow shepherd made his defence.[196]

Ang's defence

The accused, known as Ang, was working on a property near Gayndah, southern Queensland (then part of NSW) when he was arrested. With its dramatic images and the faint pencilled text, this account can be linked to an 1850 incident and trial. A report at the time commented that the drawing "may be found useful in eliciting the truth." Not only did Ang not speak English, but from this defence, produced in a mixture of words and drawings, it would seem his written Chinese or Fujianese was poor also. Nevertheless, his point was clear enough as the accompanying note in English understood it:

> *This is the defence of a Chinaman accused of manslaughter. The Chinese characters are supposed to tell the same story as the sketches which evidently assert the death of the slain man to be accidental.*[197]

***Image 35:** Excerpt from Ang's defence*

Now in Sydney's Mitchell Library the drawing is not with the trial documents held in the NSW State Archives but rather was passed by map maker Frederick Proeschal to Justice Edward Wise. Wise was a progressive politician and Supreme Court judge who however did not preside over Ang's trial; this was Justice Stephen.

How Proeschal obtained the document is unclear but we do have a clear account of its production, at first on slate and then paper:

> *Shortly after his reception in the gaol, he signified his desire to be furnished with the means of writing, or drawing ; and, having been provided with a slate and pencil, he depicted on the slate what appeared to be intended as a representation of the quarrel between himself and the deceased, and its consequences. Subsequently, he was supplied with drawing paper and a lead pencil, and he then sketched, in the more durable manner then in his power, a picture which, we are informed, is almost a perfect copy of his former production on the slate.*[198]

Summary translation of the written statement:

The writing mentions three people, all Amoy men: Ang Heng (洪興), the writer of this explanation; the man who was killed Kou Hoe (許花); and a witness and, according to Ang Hing the main cause of the difficulties, Ang Tchin (紅珍). These men are all drawn in a series of sketches which are on the reverse side of Ang's written statement, and each is labelled by name. The final sketch, shown above, illustrates Ang on the right, struggling with Kou at the centre and then Kou again, presumably moments later on the left, with the annotation "Kou Hoe died" (許花死).

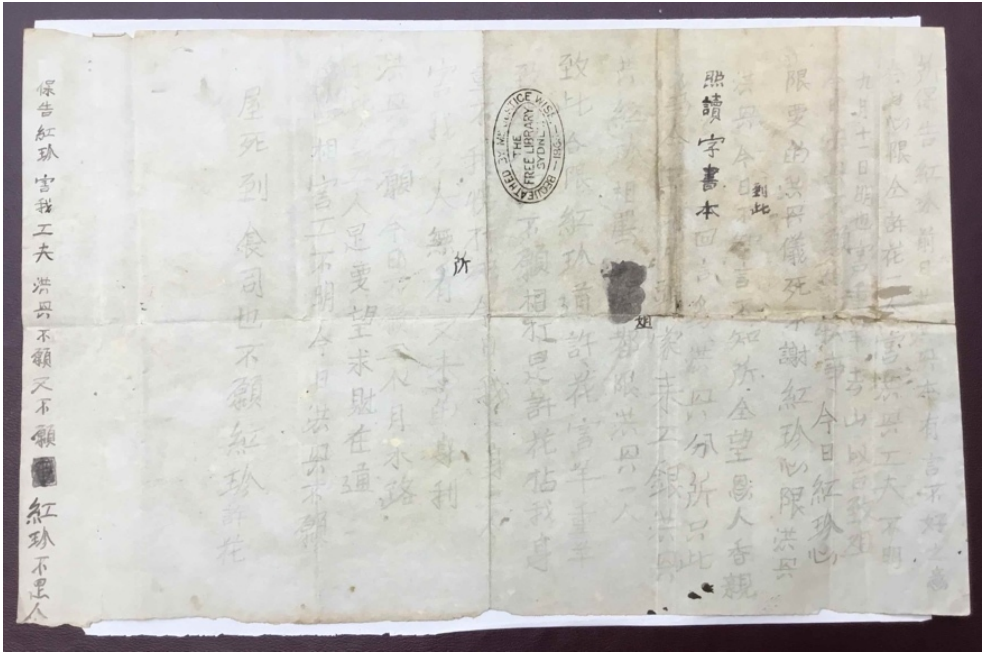


Image 36: *Ang's defence – written*

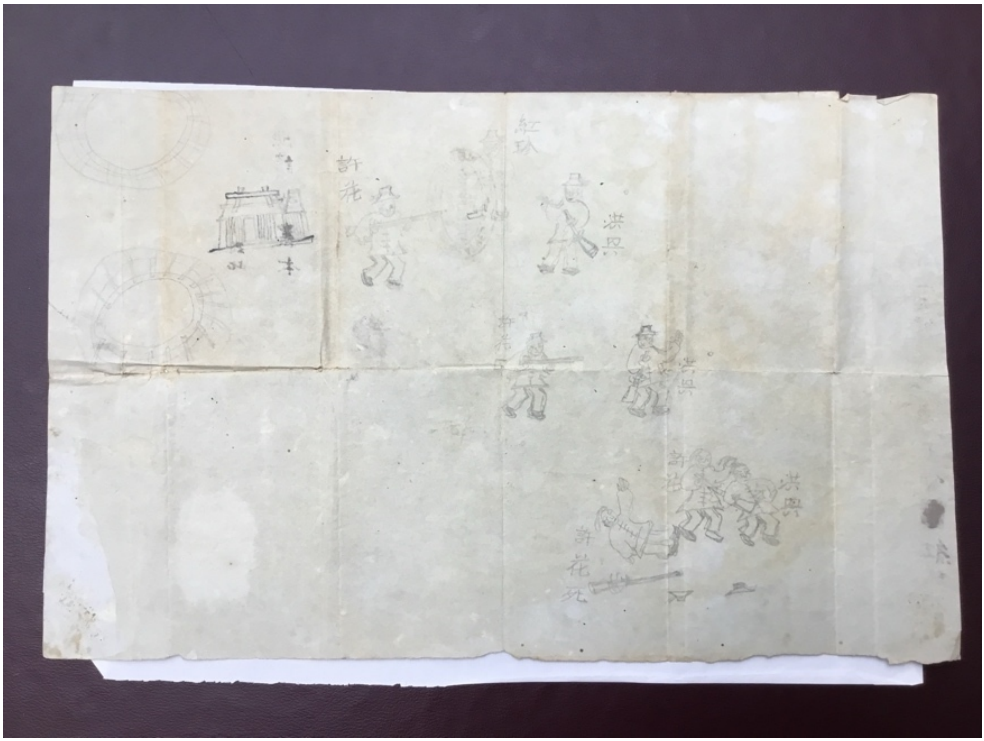


Image 37: *Ang's defence – illustrated*

Translation[199]

Report / Petition

Âng Heng 洪興 (the petitioner) states that a few days ago Âng Tchin
紅珍 had spoken badly of him.
Today, Âng Heng says that Khó͘Hoe 許花 has harmed him; his work has not been recognized.
On the eleventh day of the ninth month, I was also sent to herd sheep in the mountains.
Today Âng Heng is unwilling [to accept these matters]; this is truly what is in his heart.
Âng Tchin insists that Âng Heng must die; Âng Heng cannot but resent this.
Now I, Âng Heng, have come here. I do not know what words to say. I entirely rely on the benefactor to look upon me with compassion.
Reading and writing, I have little learning; I only try to explain myself here.
Now, at the beginning of this month, the boss came to pay wages to Âng Heng.
But Âng Heng was scolded and cursed; all the blame fell on him alone.
Therefore, I accuse that Âng Tchin and Khó͘Hoe caused me to lose the sheep.
Because of this I was unwilling to fight back; yet Khó͘Hoe forced me, and in the struggle a heavy stone struck me. I mistakenly killed [someone] and now I alone am in trouble.
This has ruined my work; I cannot make a living.
Âng Heng is unwilling to endure this. I do not want to spend three months traveling by water to come here to work, only to find disaster instead of wages.
People come here for work, hoping to earn money and make a living.
But others harmed me; today I, Âng Heng, cannot accept this.
I would rather starve to death than endure what Âng Tchin and Khó͘Hoe have done to me.
Therefore I accuse Âng Tchin: he has destroyed my work.
Âng Heng cannot accept this.
Âng Tchin is no human being.

This document was written and drawn by Ang Heng in 1850. Ang was arrested for the murder of a fellow Chinese labourer at Reid's station, around fifty miles west of Maryborough, New South Wales (now Queensland).[200] Ang spoke a dialect of the Southern Min language and his writing reflects this.[201] His drawing defence is not mentioned again in the court depositions where Ang was charged with murder. However, he was convicted of manslaughter, receiving a sentence of five years. Perhaps his efforts to explain himself was "found useful in eliciting the truth". Ang was imprisoned on Sydney's Cockatoo Island, until he was pardoned.[202] This same Ang was also one of the two men on Cockatoo Island researched by Shirley Fitzgerald (where he is called Ong) who reports Ang's reluctance to leave before his mate Eu's sentence expired and their eventual pardoning in 1853.[203]

The case of Ang Heng reveals something of the hopes and despair of an Amoy man. His writing mentions his three months voyage, his despair over the lost sheep and his anger over his treatment by others. He repeats his refusal to accept his situation. Drawing and writing while in gaol, surrounded by foreigners, he must have been at the end of his tether. Nevertheless, we know Ang Heng did survive to make a friend on Cockatoo Island even if we know nothing of his life thereafter.

We do know something of other Amoy men however, some who fared better than Ang Heng

and others who perhaps fared worse, as they made their lives in the older Colony of NSW and the new one of Queensland. Perhaps the final word on the reason for both the treatment and the reaction of the Amoy men in colonial Australia can be left to the anonymous contributor to the *Moreton Bay Free Press* who makes clear what he wants in a worker—and it is certainly not that they behave as he would:

> *The employment of Chinamen, it has been fully proved, is on the whole, a failure. They are not the people we require. Too much like Englishmen in their wants and intelligence, they are yet too dissimilar in their nature, habits, and language, ever to combine successfully with our own population. Although sufficiently energetic, and industrious, on their own account, they have ever been found bad servants in any laborious out-door occupation. They are fully as much alive to their own interests; and have quite as good a notion of their own value, as any of their English employers.*[204]

This assessment was to be proven both wrong and right many times over as numerous Amoy men made their way as free men in the years after the expiration of their contracts.

16

Vignette VIII - Thomas Ashney

The Gayndah Court House stands where was once a Chinese Boarding House, possibly owned by Thomas Ashney.

Thomas Ashney is probably the most well-known of the Amoy men due to his extensive business interests that have left a reasonable paper trail. While we do not know his original Chinese name, we do know his mother's name was Chiang-Ho and his father was Chang-Ho, who is said to have been the captain of a vessel.[205] Arriving on the *Nimrod* in 1848, aged around 18, Thomas married Jemima Wood, and soon had a son Thomas, born in 1861. That same year he applied for and was granted naturalization, the application stating he was a shearer and already possessed of property.[206] Thomas became a shopkeeper in Gayndah, where unlike many rate-paying "Chinaman" his actual (if anglicised name) was entered.[207]

In 1868 he was running a "public house" in Gayndah which was attacked by people described as "roughs" on their way to a gold rush. While no doubt distressing, the incident does not seem to have been racially motivated and a "numerously signed petition" requested the Ashneys receive government compensation, which was paid the following year.[208] By 1873 Thomas was working as a butcher and was also buying hides and shipping them to Sydney for sale.[209] He also seems to have set up in the new mining town of Rawbelle for a while, but soon after disposed of his retail trade and moved back into being a licensee of the Queensland Hotel in Gayndah.[210] Thomas was prominent in the Gayndah community including being a Governor of the Gayndah hospital and at least an alderman on Gayndah council.[211]

By 1883 Thomas seems to have had extensive business interests but the poor economy of

Gayndah was putting this in jeopardy. Nevertheless, the news of his financial difficulties was treated with great sympathy and he is described as a person "who for 20 years past has commanded general respect in his dealings as hotel and storekeeper at Gayndah".[212] It was not long after this that in a rare instance of his Chinese origin directly impacting his life, Thomas and his son were both required to pay the recently imposed £10 poll tax when they re-entered Queensland after a trip to Sydney.[213] The amount was refunded.[214]

In 1887, due to further financial difficulties, Thomas's estate was assigned and numerous properties he owned around Gayndah were sold.[215] After this the references to Thomas Ashney disappear and by the time he died on his son's property near Roma he had been so far forgotten by the Gayndah community that despite his long years of prominence there no obituary seems to have been published. He nevertheless left numerous offspring and today many Ashneys and other descendants of Thomas Ashney of Amoy, China are Australian citizens.

17

6. A well dressed, intelligent Chinaman

– post contract life

Questions of language and identity

By the time of his release in 1853, Ang Heng and his fellow Amoy immigrants in the colonies were beginning to have their presence overwhelmed by tens of thousands of more men from China. These were people who came to Australia from another region of the Qing Empire entirely. This was a region, however, that like Amoy's Fujian hinterland, was also long associated with travel and labour migration: Guangdong province's Pearl River Delta.[216] The arrival of people from another area of the Qing Empire raised issues of language and identity, as well as increased the perception of an alien and potentially threatening new presence in the colonial society.

Bringing in workers from the Qing Empire from any region meant the arrival of people who spoke various languages. As early as May 1852 an ad for an interpreter to assist in hiring Chinese labourers was placed, boasting of three languages: that of Amoy (Hokkien), Hong Kong (Cantonese) and "Shanghai" (a Wu dialect).[217] All three are quite distinct languages and such a linguist would have been rare in the Australian colonies.

When the mostly Hokkien speaking Amoy men did appear in court, these cases were of course conducted in English, and so interpreters were required.[218] This was a feature the legal profession was usually most attentive to. In May 1852 two indentured men, Jipee and Choo Neang, had absconded from their respective services, though for two very different reasons. In both cases, however, they were discharged by the magistrate on the grounds that a lack of interpreter meant the cases could not be prosecuted.[219] These cases were in Sydney. In Gayndah it seems the magistrates were not prepared to go so far as to dismiss cases, instead persevering with "one-sided" cases while "applying for a paid Chinese interpreter". This same report asserted that "the whole of their worships' attention" was "being taken up every Court day in deciding disputes between the celestials and their employers".[220] In the case of Ang discussed above, an interpreter from Sydney needed to be sent for before his trial in Brisbane could proceed.

CHINESE IMMIGRANTS.

EMPLOYERS about to hire Chinese Labourers can be supplied with properly prepared printed agreements; and can also have the aid of a well qualified INTERPRETER, who is thoroughly conversant with the Hong Kong, Amoy, and Shanghai languages, and who is also well acquainted with the habits of these labourers. Apply to I. D. NICHOLS, Licensed Shipping Agent, Marine Hotel, Lower George-street. 7783

Image 35: Advertisement for a multilingual interpreter

Celestials[221]

It is important to note that from the beginning of their residence in the Australian colonies, Chinese people were seen as exotic and rarely given much in the way of individuality as, "six of the natives of the Celestial Empire" when describing men passing through Bathurst to work on a local property.[222] This same account also directly links the appearance of the shepherds—"all of small stature"—with the "easy success" of the British in the then recently conducted Opium War.[223] These generalisations and stereotyping were to be a common feature of the white settler perceptions of Chinese people throughout the 19th century and well into the 20th century.[224]

It is at this point that a number of issues converge. One is the labelling of people as "Chinese", something too readily done by European Australians then and now. It is also done nowadays by people of modern China in the interests of a national identity that did not exist in the 19th century Qing Empire. This comparatively recently-developed sense of nationality evokes a claim to participation in Australian history regardless of province or district of origin. This identification of people from the present with those of the past is a common issue in history and needs to be kept in mind. The reality is that in the 19th century people identified themselves less as "Chinese" – if at all – and more by their dialects and villages of origin. This is not to say that European Australians were completely unaware of the different groups of nominally "Chinese" people.[225] Nevertheless a generalised labelling of anyone from the Qing Empire as "Chinese" was most common.

Another misidentification that also needs to be kept in mind is that of labelling all Chinese as "coolies" and/or contract workers or even slaves. This is something that occurred partly because of the lack of distinction between those who came as Amoy Shepherds on contracts and those who came via Hong Kong under credit ticket arrangements. Certainly, the "credit-ticket" arrangements of those from the Pearl River Delta were not clearly understood.

The "credit-ticket" arrangements of the Pearl River Delta people were diverse and did mean people often had to work for others in order to pay off their debts. However, an important distinction with the contracts of the Amoy workers is that the money was often owed to relatives

or at least agents from the same villages or dialect groups. Also, they were unwritten contracts that were not enforceable in the courts of the colonies.

The labelling of Chinese as "coolies" was also because it became convenient for many to believe the Chinese gold miners were coolie-like slaves as this helped to justify discrimination and rejection of Chinese men as "unfair" competition for European workers.[226] It was in this context that the men of Amoy entered colonial life as their five-year contracts expired.

Dress sense

Lacking images from this early period it is difficult to imagine what the Amoy men looked like. The only two photographs we appear to have are of a mature and an elderly man.[227] Clothing is one aspect of this with many imagining the Amoy men continuing to wear some form of traditional dress. Ang's illustration would seem to support this continuation, though he was probably drawing representative figures rather than attempting to be realistic. One detailed description of clothing worn reveals what two men at least sported in 1852 as they absconded:

> *"Lim Soon," about five feet nine inches high, short hair, wore a blue cloth cap, pilot cloth jacket, regatta shirt, mole trousers, lilac figured silk neckerchief yellow border, and shoes much worn.*
>
> *"Lo Chai," about five feet six inches high, short hair, wore a brown California hat, drab alpaca jacket, velvet collar, regatta shirt, mole trousers, and shoes much worn.*

It is also noted that they did carry with them "some China clothing", though what this meant is unclear.[228]

Image 36: Lim Soon and Lo Chai – AI generated from the written description

Lure of the Goldfields

It is unclear when the last contracted worker arrived, possibly around 1853, by which time the first arrivals in 1848 would have already worked out their contracts. Some of the first goldminers were Amoy men who decided the goldfields offered better prospects, though whether their contracts had expired beforehand or not is unclear. Apparently, there were also some attempts to bring in yet more contract workers to replace European workers heading for the goldfields, but this was soon given up as these workers too preferred unsure gold to assured (low) wages.[229] This was also the period when the place of origin in China for new arrivals on the goldfields began to change as people of the Pearl River Delta begin to arrive in large numbers directly on the goldfields.

It was also at this time, from around 1853 to 1858, that all the 3,000 or more surviving Amoy men became free to seek their own employment. After their contracts expired many continued to work as free men in the same areas, while others joined the gold rush. The difference in treatment of Chinese workers when under contract and those same workers when free to work as they chose was remarkable. With one researcher commenting:

It is difficult to reconcile the abusive treatment of Chinese labourers during the indenture period ... with the genuine support ... accorded them in the post-indenture period.[230]

With the increasing attraction of gold many in the colony preferred to leave their positions and seek their fortunes in digging up this metal. A parliament dominated by employers quickly moved to control such behaviour and the Gold Fields Management Act in 1852 included the clause that: "No such lease or license ... shall be granted to any person who shall not produce to the Commissioner ... that he has been duly discharged from his last place of service if any ..."[231]

Wentworth, the Solicitor General and as we know an employer of indentured labour tried to "prevent any Chinaman, whether naturalized or not from obtaining leave or license unless he was duly discharged from all obligations to his master by indenture or otherwise", but this amendment was lost.[232] It seems this measure was needed as far as the employers were concerned but difficult to enforce if determination was shown as with Tan Shong who was "brought before the Bench by Mr Buckland, charged with having absconded from his service". He was "ordered to return to his master's service", but "instead of returning to Mr Buckland, went up to the diggings". Again apprehended, "the narrative was subjected to some ambiguity" while the length of time involved apparently "debarred the Magistrates from exercising any jurisdiction in the matter".[233]

Adaptation and hostility

Aside from how some were treated by those who employed them, we have very little knowledge of how the men from Amoy were treated by general society. We do know that many adapted to local society despite facing hostility, and that many married and became naturalized.[234] "Many" however means in this case only a minority of hundreds that can be identified, leaving the history of the bulk of the 3,000 men from Amoy unaccounted for. This is of course typical of most people in the 19th century but it does make any conclusions drawn tentative and the examples we do have indicative only.

An incident from 1854 may be suggestive, but it should not be assumed to be typical of everyone's experiences despite the magistrate's opinion based on cases brought before him. A "young man, named Donald Bryan" attacked "a few Chinese [who] were taking a glass of grog" at the bar of the Gardeners' Arms, on Botany Road, Sydney. Among the group attacked was an Amoy man named John Johnson who was described as "a well dressed, intelligent Chinaman, who spoke English well, and professed the Christian faith". The magistrate who tried this case was of the opinion that these were "rather common assaults made by young men of the prisoner's standing upon Chinamen". Donald Bryan was sentenced "to pay a fine of 20s, or in default of payment to be imprisoned during fourteen days".[235]

Becoming a subject

Aside from being the victim of prejudice we do know that many of the Amoy men prospered sufficiently to buy land, set up businesses and to marry. Unfortunately, as a distinct group they very quickly fade into the general Australian background with even the families themselves after a few generations no longer remembering or realising anything distinct about their ancestors. Growing interest in family history, the fading of prejudice against having a non-European ancestor and DNA evidence is helping to reverse this trend.

Some contemporary evidence is to be found in numerous applications for naturalization. These

applications began only a few years after the contracts of the Amoy men expired and many mention the wish to acquire land for which naturalization was a prerequisite. An interesting aspect of these naturalization applications is that after 1858 the Governor of NSW began holding up such applications from "Chinese" men.[236] He did this because the NSW Parliament began to debate a restrictive immigration law similar to that which had been in Victoria since 1856 aimed at people from China. This was a law much debated and only finally passed in the aftermath of the Lambing Flat riots in 1861. Neither the Governor nor the NSW Parliamentarians distinguished between the Amoy men working as shepherds and later in other occupations such as storekeepers, and the more numerous Pearl River Delta arrivals who so frightened the goldminers of European heritage. Men like James Tankoe and William Edward Oram Chi needed to wait until after 1867 when further legislative changes meant they could once more apply to be subjects of a British Colony.[237] This was the path in the Colony of NSW. Those who found themselves living in the new Colony of Queensland after its separation in 1859 did not suffer this restriction and many Amoy men were able to be naturalized British subjects in Queensland from at least 1860.[238]

What the declined naturalization applications tell us is that within less than ten years of their being free to work as they wished, a number of Amoy men had acquired land or wished to do so, married and were working in a variety of occupations that included artificial flowermaker, gold digger, confectioner, farmer, and butcher.[239] This is of course only a snapshot of the whole contingent of men from Amoy and many would not have made any such applications.[240]

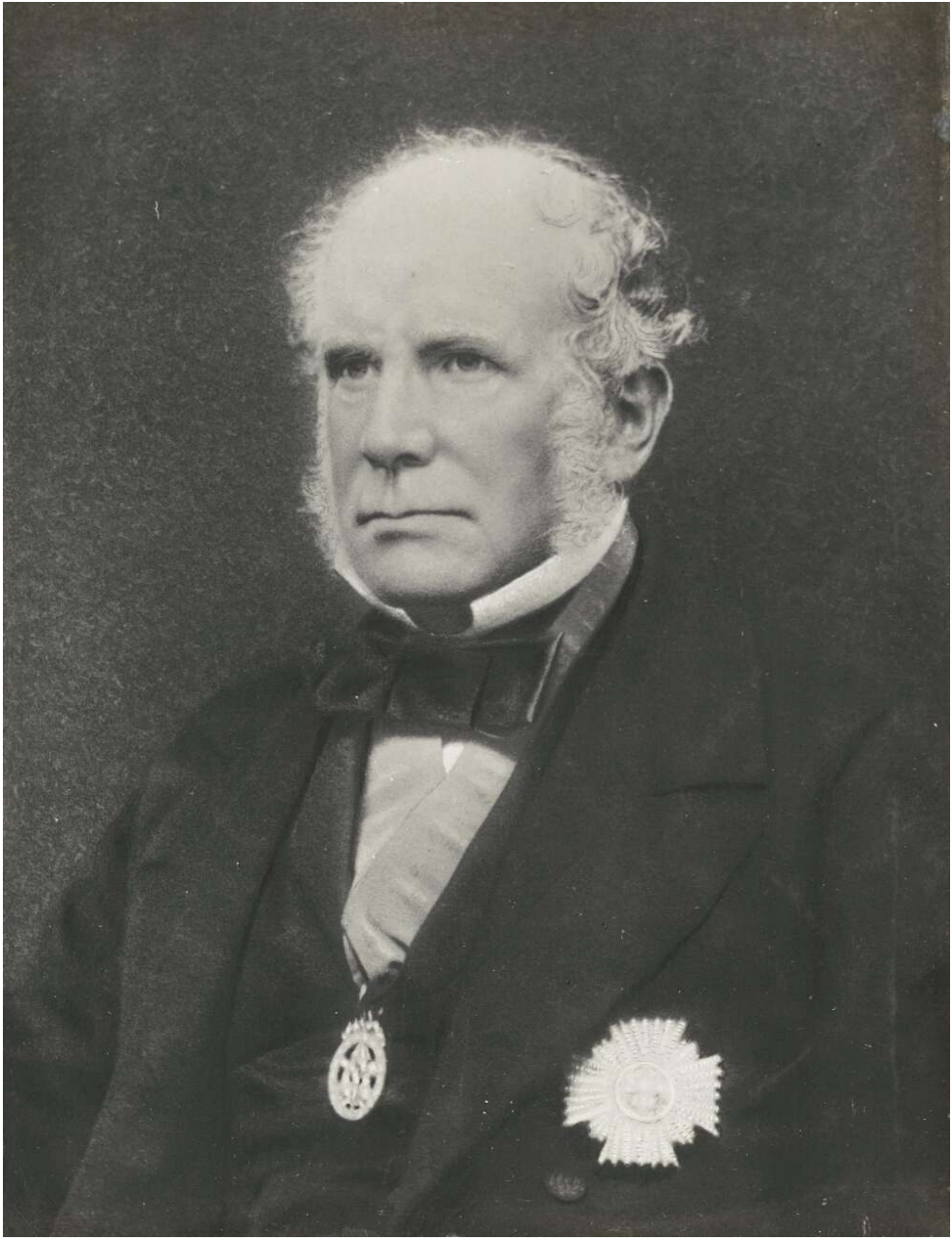


Image 40: Governor Thomas Denison, oversaw QLD separation, kept New England in NSW, and built Fort Denison.

Individuals

Names on headstones and naturalization applications do not convey much of an impression as to personality. However, a handful of incidents give us an idea of how some at least adapted to life as Australians. Two names appear on a number of occasions and assuming they are not different people with the same name, John Johnson and Gentleman John provide us with a lively picture. Of

course, it needs to be remembered that it is their very liveliness that gets them reported in the media and so once again they cannot be taken to be representative.

A few months before John Johnson was assaulted at the Gardeners' Arms, he was himself involved in an assault of his own, on constables no less. This occurred as he was apparently sheltering what were presumably fellow Hokkien speakers who had deserted an Indian bound ship they had been crewing.[241] About a year after this John Johnson appears in court again, this time as an interpreter. The defendant in this case being "John Hurley, alias Gentleman John, a Chinaman, from Amoy". Gentleman John was accused of threatening a man named A-Sing with a revolver for the purpose of getting "£3, the price of a China ticket". The jury found him not guilty, perhaps because although he did have a revolver, it was apparently loaded with only "half of a bullet".[242] This assault took place at Sydney Flat, a goldfield at Rocky River near Uralla.

Next, we see Gentleman John in Brisbane in 1859. Again, in court, though it should be remembered that doing something illegal was what got you in the newspapers and so most law-abiding Amoy men are lost to history. Gentleman John is again stealing from fellow Chinese immigrants, and as in his previous court appearance he seems to favour harassing men from Canton.[243]

A dispute involving a whole family, that of George Arthur Keong who was one of the first of the Amoy men to be naturalized, is recorded in Warwick in 1870. This case involved a battle between the Keongs and their neighbours the Pages. Although race as an issue is not mentioned, we gain a tantalizing glimpse of real life as this schoolyard drama goes straight to the courtroom.

Young 15-year-old Mary Keong, said she was walking home from school when Arthur Page grabbed hold of her and refused to let go. She dispatched her younger brother to fetch their father. George Arthur Keong, on arrival is reported to have "struck Page [Arthur] twice with a saddle-strap". George and Arthur went down when John Page joined in and "caught him [George] by the hair and struck him twice on the neck and chin."

The Pages account differed. According to them, the Keong boys had "called Arthur Page names", when Arthur chased them, and Mary "struck him with a piece of paling". When Arthur tried to grab it, Keong himself charged in, knocked him down, and sat on him until John dragged him off.

With both sides pointing fingers, the Bench simply "dismissed both cases".[244] In an interesting addendum to this incident, Mary Keong married John Page a few years later.[245]

Conflict with each other

Amoy men fighting with each other did not end with the contract period. Two cases of murder reveal something of the rough life of those who continued to live as single agricultural workers in the immediate post-contract period. The 1861 Gayndah murder of a Chinese man known as Johnny took place in what appears to have been one of several Chinese boarding houses in the town. This seems to have been a common form of accommodation for men without families, and gambling was a regular amusement. When Deong stabbed Johnny, his threats were sufficient that the others failed even to fetch a doctor. The death was not reported and instead they buried the body secretly in the garden. The whole circumstance came to light when another Amoy man, James Chiam (aka Shium), an Alderman in Maryborough, heard of the event and not only informed the police but travelled to Gayndah to help conduct the search.[246] Ung (aka Ang) the boarding house keeper was arrested as an accessory and a Constable M'Cormish was sent after Deong, tracking him down on the "Fairfield diggings" near Maitland. Deong was described as "a

powerful-looking fellow."[247] The trial took place in Brisbane where James Chiam stated he had known both the murdered Johnny and the murderer Deong previously. Remarkably, despite the witness statements concerning the circumstances of the death of Johnny, the judge instructed the jury to discharge the prisoner due to the incompetence of the interpreters. At which point James Chiam was only stopped from addressing the jury by the threat of a month in gaol.[248]

While the trial at Gayndah seemed to end on a farcical note, a similar case also involving murder at a Chinese boarding house may have ended more judiciously. Though we have only the depositions and not trial record itself. At Leyburn south of Toowoomba, the murder of a man named Suchong took place in 1859 and the accused was Kee Tam, alias Coleman. A man named Lim deposed that while he was at the time living a Yandilla some 30 kilometres away, he had gone to Canal Creek, Leyburn where some 15 Chinese men were then at the boarding house. The accused and the murdered man and another had, as in the previous case, been playing cards and gambling. Getting up at night to "make water" Lim saw the body of Suchong on the ground dead and the accused Kee Tam and others standing over the body holding an axe and tomahawk. Lim, frightened, returned to bed but saw the body wrapped in a blanket and taken away; returning the group "washed the blood off the floor by candle light", and threatened Lim with death if he told anyone. Lim's final words are: "After the murder, when I returned to Canal Creek, prisoner had gone. I afterwards stayed at Canal Creek until Mr Murray came with Hew, Suchong's brother, who claimed Suchong's saddles, saying they belonged to his deceased brother."[249]

Uncertainty about return

Acknowledging that we can trace only hundreds of the more than 3,000 men of Amoy raises the question of how many if any returned to China? Of the approximately **3,600** men that are recorded to have been shipped to NSW from Amoy it is now impossible to say what proportion returned or stayed. Two features of their subsequent history make the story of individual Amoy men difficult to unravel. Both features are in strong contrast to the behaviour of those from the Pearl River Delta. The first is a greater tendency to adopt "English" sounding names, either themselves or their families within one or two generations. While this also occurred with some from the Pearl River Delta, it was to a much lesser degree. The second is, unlike most Pearl River Delta arrivals including those who settled in Australia, those who remained in Australia from Amoy do not seem to have kept up any contacts with or attempted to bring other relatives from their home villages in Fujian. This is despite the fact that Fujian people, like those of the Pearl River Delta, had been going and returning from South East Asia for generations.[250]

Of course, the men from Amoy arrived under conditions that we know from the evidence of the Court of Inquiry into the 1852 Amoy protests included kidnapping, coercion and trickery. This would suggest that their links to family were weak or non-existent and so motivations to return were not high. The number we have evidence for who stayed, married and prospered is only a small proportion of the 3,600.[251] However, anonymity is the situation for most people in the 19th century Australian colonies and does not prove that most did not stay and at least attempted to marry and prosper even if that was not their fate.

However, it is highly unlikely that no one would have wished to return or made the attempt and there are a number of clues that suggest some if not many did in fact return.[252] In at least one report of some who returned there is also evidence of prosperity. In an 1858 account from Gayndah where many former Amoy men became landowners or established businesses:

Twelve Chinese left here on Sunday last, homeward bound (for Amoy); they carry upwards of £3,000 with them. One, Han Ting, possessing over £500.[253]

Another report of Chinese gold diggers returning to China via Hong Kong does includes mention of some having "taken passage for Amoy" specifically. Unfortunately, theirs was not a very successful return:

Another batch of them had taken passage for Amoy from this port in a Macau lorcha, No.124, which was attacked and plundered on the 8th inst. The poor fellows lost above $5,000 dollars.[254]

Perhaps the dangers of transshipping back to Amoy via Hong Kong was a discouragement?

Image 41: Model of a Macau lorcha
– a Chinese rigged ship with a European style hull. First evolved in Macau

A final clue in the all too thin evidence for return comes from the court case mentioned above in which "John Hurley, alias Gentleman John, a Chinaman, from Amoy" threatened A-Sing with a revolver for the purposes of obtaining "£3, the price of a China ticket".[255] Gentleman John may not have intended to return himself but the idea of return was evidently seen as a plausible one.

Thus, we know that some at least did return and even returned with significant money. Of course, in the nature of things not all were so fortunate. Darnell felt that continuing to work on a property after the expiration of a contract signified "their inability to raise the price of the return fare to China."[256] This is perhaps too harsh an interpretation that does not allow for the lack of

remaining links to China or the circumstance of their original recruitment. In any case we have seen many who prospered who obviously chose not to return.

The return of some at least of the former indentured labourers to their place of origin begs a question that arises when those from Fujian province are compared with those from the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong province. Why did those from Fujian not continue to come to Australia while those of the Pearl River Delta did? We know that many remained and even prospered but there is no evidence that they sent for relatives to join them unlike those from Guangdong. This is despite the fact that many from Fujian were doing just this in South East Asia (aka Nanyang). We have evidence that some returned but their experiences did not seem to have inspired anyone to follow in their footsteps. This is also a strong contrast to the subsequent history of those from the Pearl River Delta region whose succeeding generations of arrivals and departures have continued to the present day.[257]

There are a number of possible explanations for this difference. The nature of their recruitment has already been mentioned. Another is the dominance of Pearl River Delta people in Hong Kong to the possible exclusion of Fujian people who continued to travel to South East Asia via Chinese junk and European shipping while bypassing Hong Kong. The arrival of Europeans at Amoy provided both new shipping options to travel to the Nanyang and an avenue to reach the Colony of NSW. But while Amoy remained in Chinese control, Hong Kong became a British controlled port, albeit with a majority Chinese population. It is known that the Hsiangshan (now Zhongshan, 中山) capital Shekki, (石岐) was attacked in 1844 by rebels. This resulted in the first major influx of a "better class" of Chinese into Hong Kong according to European observers. And as early as 1846, Hong Kong had a Chinese population of over 12,000, presumably all from the nearby Pearl River Delta.[258]

For those who began to participate in the Californian and Australian gold rushes the significant factor was Hong Kong. This British port introduced access to the necessary European shipping that allowed those of the Pearl River Delta entree to at first California and then the goldfields of Victoria and NSW. At the same time the nominally British port of Hong Kong was being largely settled by people from the Pearl River Delta and it is this dominance that perhaps cuts off the peoples of Fujian and Amoy who do not go these new goldfields but rather continue as before to go to the Nanyang.

Thus, the men of Amoy became integrated into Australian history in a way closer to the Welsh or Germans and other smaller migrant groups of the 19th century who have also left little trace. Yet their Chinese origin, the rising interest in family history, and the tendency of white Australians to exoticise any history involving "Chinese" means their story does not end here.

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Vignette IX - Tom (Thomas) Gam

Jacob Gam one of Tom Gam's many children

Tom (Thomas) Gam (c.1833–1906) is unusual in that his place of birth is recorded as "near" Amoy rather than Amoy itself.[259] Arriving in New South Wales in 1851, he—like many of the Amoy men—worked for the Australian Agricultural Company before trying his hand on the goldfields at

which he was reported to have been successful.[260]

By 1863, Tom was settled in Avondale near Dapto, in the Illawarra. That year, he married Barbara Lechleiter, a young woman of German background. Tom and Barbara raised fourteen children—eight sons and six daughters—remarkable for the time, as all survived into adulthood.

In 1872, Tom Gam applied for naturalization, and it is on his certificate that he is described as being born “near Femoy, China”—a clumsy rendering of “Amoy.” In the late 1870s, the Gam family moved north to Wyong Creek on the Central Coast of NSW. The area was being opened up to farming, timber-getting, and small settlement.

Their son Jacob Gam (1864–1939) became a prominent community figure, active in the Wyong Progress Association and the local timber industry. On 7 April 1906, Tom Gam died suddenly at Wyong. An obituary described him as “well known and respected in the district”.[261] He was buried at Jilliby Cemetery.

19

7. Myths and legacies

– in the DNA

A lack of sources and research inevitably means that a great many myths and stereotypes have arisen concerning the men from Amoy. Increasing family history research is beginning to dig away at these, although a narrow focus on one individual can sometimes enhance myths and stereotypes rather than dispel them. As mentioned earlier, the Amoy men or their families had a greater tendency to change their family names—another point of difference with Pearl River Delta people. This has made their tracing in Australian history more difficult for family historians, with DNA techniques gradually reversing this.

The people from the Pearl River Delta have dominated the subsequent history to such an extent that many in Australia now know nothing of the Amoy men. Most often the history of the Amoy men has been merged with the even more stereotyped history of the Chinese in Australia–goldminers. The gold rushes, as we saw above, brought many thousands of Chinese people into the newly created Colony of Victoria and the older and now smaller Colony of NSW. These came not from Amoy or Fujian province but from the province of Guangdong's Pearl River Delta region.[262] They arrived in more significant numbers than the Amoy contractors who did sometimes join them on the goldfields. That it was impossible to keep people working as shepherds when the prospect of gold existed, and that this ended the importation of contract labour from China into Australia, is perhaps the first myth associated with this history. In reality, many of the Amoy men kept working on the sheep stations, and it was the Amoy riots of 1852 that played a greater role in the termination of this migration.

Indentured for sugar – 1870s

A minor myth is that some believe Chinese workers were imported to work on sugar plantations around 1874. There is mention of a "Mackay plantation" "some time ago", though whether the workers came direct from Amoy, via Singapore, were former Palmer River gold seekers, or even came at all, is unclear.[263] It is possible the reference is to the importation not of Chinese workers but of what was then called "Chinese sugar-cane".[264] It does appear that the potential for such workers coming from Amoy was presented in 1874, but nothing seems to have eventuated.[265] The importation of workers from Singapore into the Northern territory of South Australia did take place but these appear to have been almost entirely Cantonese in origin.[266]

The one person of interest in this question is the case of Tim Tie, a cook, who was hanged for the murder of Jimmy Ah Fook in 1886. Tim Tie is recorded as having been from Amoy despite being recorded as arriving in Australia in 1876.[267] That he was from Amoy seems demonstrated by

the interpreter used in his trial and the testimony of two Cantonese-speaking priests at his execution.[268] It is not clear why his arrival is recorded as 1876. Admittedly, Tim Tie does not look old enough to have been an Amoy man from the 1850s, unless he came very young and his year of birth as 1856 is also misrecorded. On this basis it must be accepted that Tim Tie was a rare example of a person from Amoy who came after the contract period. He possibly came via Singapore from where South Australia's Northern Territory was recruiting.

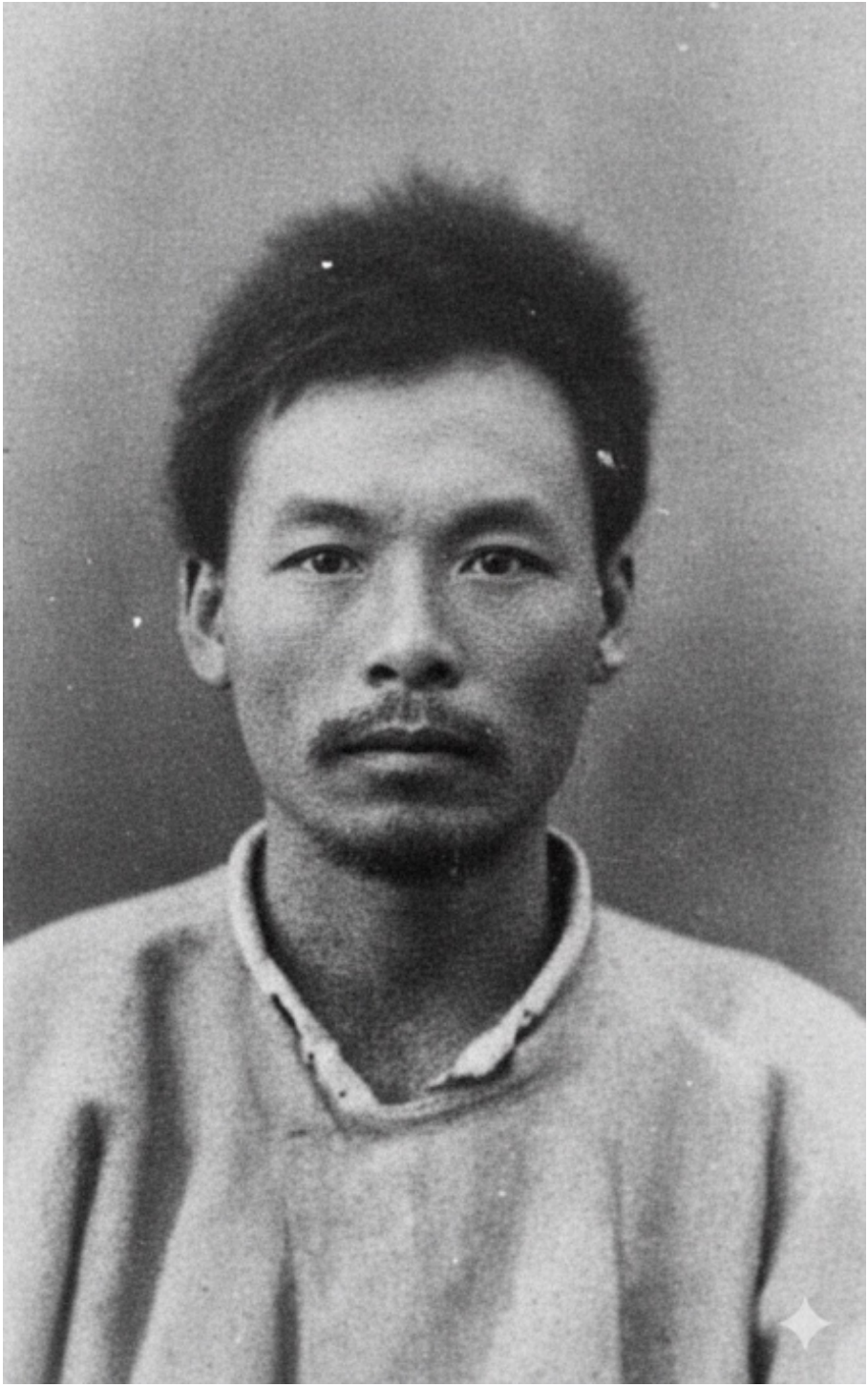
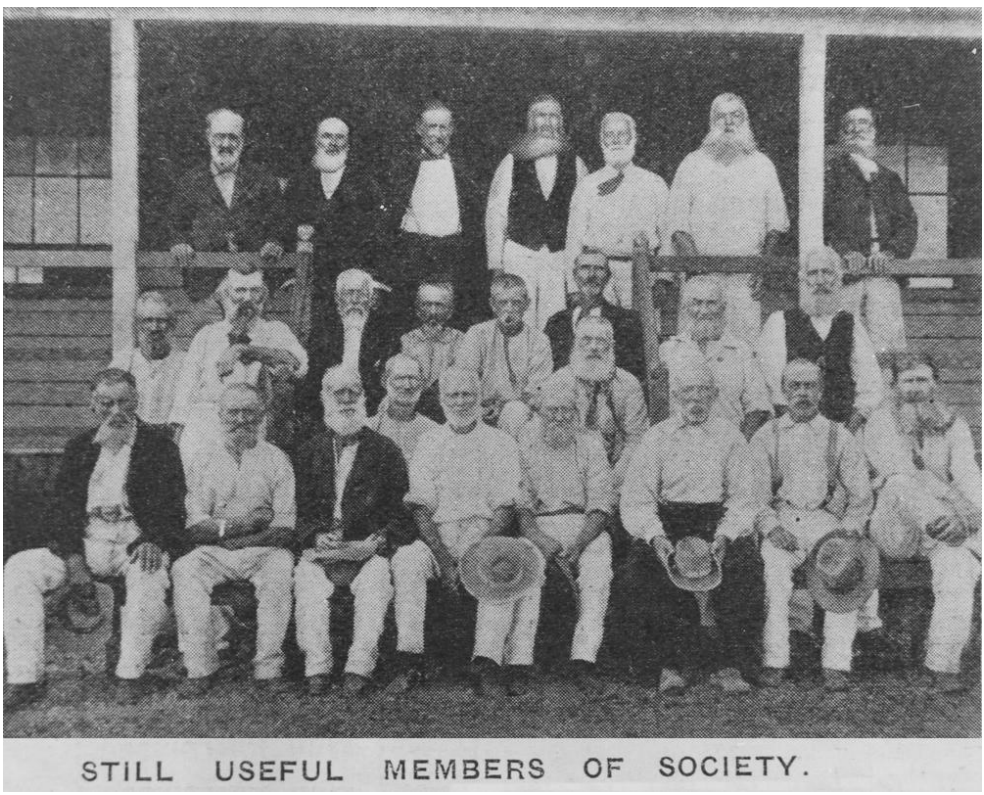


Image 42: Tim Tie – a later arriving Amoy man?

Vignette X - Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich



Many people found themselves destitute in old age, Amoy men among them.

Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich

As with Kimboo, not all of the Amoy men established successful lives in Australia or at least not enough to see them able to survive age or sickness without support. In the days before pensions, this often meant entering institutions known as asylums—essentially a type of poorhouse. One such establishment where numerous men from Amoy found themselves in later life was the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum on North Stradbroke Island.[269]

Among the men from Amoy in this asylum were:[270]

Jimmy Wong was born in 1827 and died aged 47 in 1874. Jimmy had been admitted in 1866 on the recommendation of a Toowoomba Magistrate suffering blindness and epilepsy. He is reported to have died of epilepsy.

John Song lived to be very much older and is recorded as dying of "senile decay" in 1903 having lived to be 96 years of age if his birth year of 1807 is accurate. He had only been admitted the year before but had spent two years in Toowoomba hospital before that. John is listed as arriving in Australia in 1874, though this is highly unlikely. He is recorded as a shepherd and a pagan and that his father had been a sailor named Ling Song.

Sin "Charlie" Sang had been blind 2 years when he was admitted in 1884, dying soon after, aged 54. He was born in 1830 and arrived in Sydney around 1852 working as a shepherd most of the time.

Tan Hong was also a shepherd and also blind when he was admitted in 1901, dying two years later aged 81. He had worked in the Gayndah and Condamine Districts as a shearer and shepherd, continuing to work well into his seventies.

John Eli stands out from many of the Amoy men here as he married and had several children and a brother living when he entered the Asylum in 1884. Unfortunately, he was recorded as suffering *Phthisis* [tuberculosis] and presumably entered when the disease was in its final stages and his family could no longer look after him. John Eli came to Sydney in 1847 and was a cook employed at stations and on the diggings. He was the son of a man named Chow and husband of Catherine Grant, married in Armidale, NSW when 22 years old and had 5 children. John owned land in Armidale where his family was but had been living with his brother in Dalby. He died in 1885 after less than six months residence aged 54.

21

7. cont… Memorial

St George Memorial

Perhaps the most egregious example of stereotyping is the memorial to the Amoy shepherds erected at St George in 2014. All memorials pretend to say something about the past while in reality saying a great deal more about the present of those who are funding it. What does the memorial in St George, Queensland say about the present? That the Amoy men have any memorial to them is of significance but unfortunately a combination of stereotyping and amateurism seems to have resulted in a narrow perspective. Essentially the conceivers of this monument seem to have adopted the "all coolies are the same approach" and assumed that what they knew of indentured men shipped to Cuba in the 1870s must hold for those sent to NSW in the 1850s.

This "coolie" myth resurfaces again and again, at first as an accusation levelled by European workers justifying their discrimination against any Chinese workers.[271] And in more recent times as part of an historical premise promoted by the government of China for its own purposes. Under this perspective all Chinese workers overseas are in a sense "coolies" due to the weakness of China during the so-called "Century of Humiliation" (百年耻辱).[272] For this purpose, no distinction is drawn between those who were sent to say Cuba in the 1870s or to Australia in the 1850s.

The memorial's inscription paints a picture of hardship and unrewarded labour of those leaving a "famine in Amoy" or working in "coolie" gangs and failing to return home because they "never earned enough". "Most, if not all, never saw their families again. They endured a lonely and impecunious life to the end."[273] This all paints a very grim picture, one which ignores the many intermarriages, families, and even returns to Amoy that we have seen also forms part of this group's history.[274]

The unrelenting negativity reflects a history of the overseas Chinese much favoured by the Chinese Communist Party which prefers its history without nuance.[275] However, the memorial was not funded by Chinese government sources and it would be too much to assume the content was directed by a Beijing government that would have known nothing about the subject. Instead, the fault lies with local amateurs and in particular a local community that failed to undertake sufficient research. A more nuanced perspective could have easily made this a respectable and valuable monument to a group so long neglected in Australian history.

IN MEMORIAM
To the young men who, around 1850, left the famine in Amoy
to become indentured shepherds
and those who, in the 1880s, drifted here in itinerant "coolie" gangs
after the Palmer River gold had gone
These sojourners never earned enough to return
to the families left behind in their ancestral villages.
Here now they lie
silent witnesses to the settlement history of this region.

Image 43: *Memorial to Amoy Shepherds, St George*

Headstone misreading

Associated with this is a misreading of a headstone in the St George cemetery where it is unlikely any Amoy men are in fact buried. While Amoy men may have worked on properties in the area, St George itself and its cemetery were not founded until many years after their contracts would have expired. The subsequent Chinese burials in the local cemetery are also most certainly Pearl River Delta ex-gold miners working as scrub cutters and market gardeners from the 1870s onwards.

Image 44: *White headstone, St George Cemetery*

The headstone inscription reads 東邑金美村, which refers to Jinmei Village in Dongguan County (Guangdong), a Pearl River Delta county. The error is perhaps in reading 東邑 as the Fujian district of Tong An.

Family history

The main body of this work has been designed to provide background and general information that leads up to the real cutting edge in research into the men from Amoy. This of course is family history research and the many family historians working bit by bit to uncover more about their ancestors. The biographical Vignettes scattered throughout the text have been in the main inspired by the generous work of many family historians. It is they who bring together family stories and documents while untiringly sifting through archives and government records.

At Gayndah cemetery for example, there are a number of burials of Amoy men and their immediate family members that have been recently restored by their descendants. The efforts of this multitude of family researchers are gradually revealing the deep heritage that the Amoy men have given Australia, sometimes in spite of the efforts of previous generations to hide this heritage even beyond the natural forgetting that time brings to most families.

DEDICATED TO
OUR DEAR ANCESTOR
JOHN LAW
AND HIS UNKNOWN 阿兄 (BROTHERS)
FROM AMOY (XIAMEN) THEY CAME,
AS SHEPHERDS AND LABOURERS
TO WORK THE LAND OF IDERAWAY STATION
ON WAKKA WAKKA COUNTRY
WE WILL REMEMBER THEM ALL

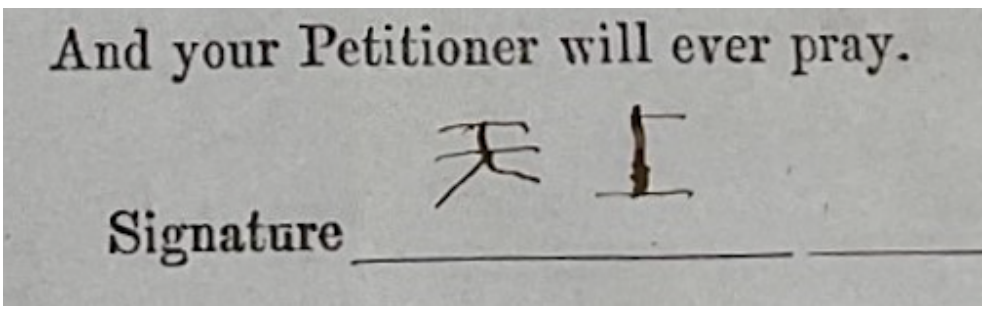
In Loving Memory of
HEATHER
TWIN TO CONSTANCE
DEVOTED WIFE TO HEC MELLOR
LOVING MOTHER OF TOM, RON, AUBREY
AND MARILYN
BORN DECEMBER 29, 1912
DIED DECEMBER 7, 1968
FEAR NO MORE THE HEAT 'O' THE SUN.
Here Also
JOHN PING
LOVING HUSBAND TO MARY JANE
BORN AMOY CHINA JUNE 15, 1853
DIED GAYNDAH SEPTEMBER 25, 1910

Image 45: *Restored family graves – Law & Ping, Gayndah Cemetery*

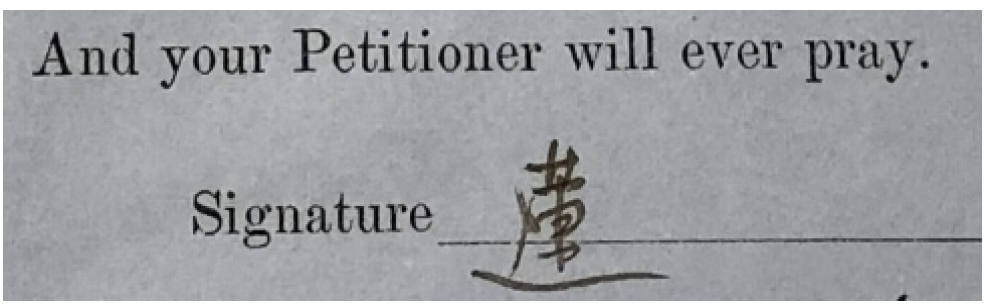
Vignettes X - Signatures

Signatures

The personally written names of Amoy men are not uncommon and can be found scattered across various documents such as marriage and birth certificates. Such signatures are more likely in the earlier years before they get into the habit of signing their names in English. Below are a few examples taken from Naturalization applications which for many of the men from Amoy would have been the first public document they were required to sign. (Their contracts more often signed by the interpreter who explained its provisions.) While these signatures bring us a little closer to the individual who wrote it, unfortunately they do not always tell us as much as we could hope. Full names are rare, and the name as written and the name adopted do not always match up. Even the style of writing tells us little about levels of literacy of a man trying to write Chinese characters with a pen rather than a brush for the first time.



Scotchy Ko - 天上 The gap between the "name" as written—which doesn't even seem to be a name—and the name on the application is especially wide here.



Leha - 蓮 Here the name as pronounced in the Hokkien dialect and its romanisation is particularly close.

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7. cont… Xiamen

Back to Amoy

All this family research has however not been able to take anyone beyond the Port of Amoy. The island port of Amoy was the embarkation point, but as we know, not necessarily the birthplace of the so-called Amoy men. The magic of DNA has been increasingly used to link up far-distant cousins in Australia, but so far has not discovered similar links in Fujian itself or elsewhere in the Fujianese diaspora. Nevertheless, that such links could be established is a possibility and a project is underway to gather sufficient DNA results that could eventually link people to a specific village or family in China. Such a link might lead to identification of the villages of origin of these Australian ancestors. Though undoubtedly some were originally from Amoy / Xiamen itself.

Image 46: *Modern Xiamen*

Questions remain

Despite the efforts of family historians and the excellent work of Maxine Darnell many questions remain to be answered concerning the history of the Amoy men. As indicated above, the most unanswered question concerns the specific villages or districts people came from. While undoubtedly some were from Amoy itself, others were from villages outside the city, perhaps not very far away according to the testimony of the witnesses to the 1852 Court of Inquiry. Yet others

may have come from Fujian's more northerly port, Quanzhou (泉州), or perhaps even further afield.

24

Vignette XII - John Kim

Dalby as John Kim would have remembered it

John Kim arrived in 1853 and, like many Amoy men, began working as a shepherd and ended his life in the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. In between, John Kim led the kind of life that left numerous records ranging from businessman to debtor, and included knife fights, assault charges and being fondly remembered long after his death.

John Kim seems to have spent nearly all the most active part of his life in and around the Queensland town of Dalby. His first appearance is in a newspaper advertisement announcing that he would not be responsible for the debts of the wife who had just left him – "without any just cause" of course.[276] Who this runaway wife was is unknown, but soon after John Kim became naturalized and set up what was later described as a fruit shop.[277] This was a business he seems to have run so well, that many years after his death he was remembered as "an important personage, by name John Kim, a Chinese storekeeper in whom some Britishers had great faith as a fair dealer, though he kept an opium den".[278]

Not all ran smoothly; "merry makers" switched his shop signs, and more seriously an attempt was made to burn down his shop using gunpowder – "supposed to have been the work of a Chinaman".[279] Nevertheless John Kim was able to purchase land and by all appearances was a

respectable and prosperous community member in the 1860s.[280] That is, until a series of incidents involving Mary Warner. Incidents that included being fined for attempting to prevent her arrest by police, followed by Mary claiming he threatened to kill her, and then a further fine a year later, this time for assaulting this same Mary Warner.[281]

By 1870 John Kim does not seem as prosperous, or at least he had sold his shop.[282] Worse was to come, and in 1872 he was charged with wounding another Chinese person. Though much to the disgust of the judge, the jury returned a verdict of not guilty "as they believed the affair to have been a Chinaman's row".[283] More debt claims seemed to have mounted after this and more fights, once again involving Mary Warner, who was stabbed in the arm by John Kim, as was a Harry Appoo in the stomach.[284]

After that, John Kim does not appear so much in the newspapers, and according to his own account given on entering the Asylum he had only done light work and been supported by charity while attending Maryborough and Brisbane Hospitals. He entered the Asylum in 1885 aged 65 suffering "senile debility". John Kim died on 2nd November 1891 and was buried the next day.[285]

Despite this sad end this was not the last word on John Kim and some in Dalby at least, on hearing of his passing remembered him, if not his assaults, fondly.

> *John Kim was a Christian, and what is more acted as one. His open hand and purse were always ready to assist and contribute where needed, he subscribed largely to the local institutions and churches, then in an embryo state, and altogether Kim in those days occupied a prominent position.*[286]

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8. Conclusion

– of what value?

Between 1848 and 1853, more than 3,000 men from Amoy (Xiamen, Fujian) came to New South Wales to work primarily as shepherds. They were generally recruited under dubious contracts that often involved coercion or deception. Their arrival filled a labour gap left by the decline of convict transportation, but conditions were harsh—isolated work, disputes over wages, and frequent court cases. The so-called Amoy Riots of 1852, protesting against abusive recruitment practices, effectively ended this migration.

Within a few years, the presence of the men from Amoy was overshadowed by the migration of Guangdong (largely Cantonese-speaking) men to the goldfields, and the story of the Amoy shepherds was largely forgotten or absorbed into stereotypes of Chinese "coolies." In reality, while some did go to the diggings, many remained as rural workers, intermarried, or were naturalized, leaving numerous descendants in contemporary Australia. Modern myths—from local memorials to Chinese state narratives—often portray them as famine-driven, impoverished victims, but emerging family history and DNA research shows a more complex legacy: one of endurance, adaptation, and quiet integration into colonial society.

Contemporary Australians favour storytelling over historical analysis in order to promote their favourite modern perspective. Thus, the highlighting of the diversity and freedoms of contemporary Chinese Australians in contrast to the discriminatory and racist past is not an unusual choice of theme. But the question can be asked: Does merely asserting the past was negative help us to understand it and ourselves? The men who came as shepherds on contracts through the port of Amoy (Xiamen) were brought by those determined to pay as little as possible for those they needed to do the hard work so they could reap the maximum profits. Racism, discrimination, exploitation and hardship were all part of the mix—nothing totally unfamiliar to modern Australia.

The straightforward story of the Amoy men in New South Wales reflects the colonial demand for cheap labour in the wake of convict transportation and the early entanglement of race, class, and labour rights in Australia. The lives led by the Amoy men after arrival are too often glimpsed only through the distorting lens of court cases, asylum admissions, or newspaper sensationalism, reminding us how archival bias can erase the ordinary from history. The contribution of the men from Amoy to pastoral expansion was real and significant, even if it has remained under-recognised—obscured by myths of victimisation or by narratives that collapse their experience into that of later Cantonese gold seekers.

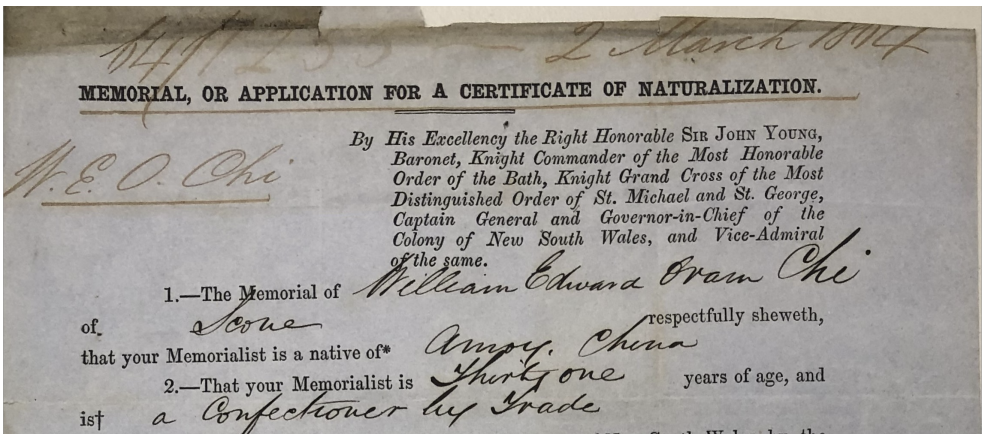
This contribution by the men from Amoy was recognised at the time, as was their

determination to be treated fairly that led to the accusation that they were "too much like Englishmen". But this recognition of the success of some should not lead to an over romanticisation of their independence or intelligence. Australia's convict history is replete with stories of those transported away from mean or desperate conditions only to achieve success in the colonies. This is not every convict's story, nor is it every Amoy man's story. But it does reveal the essential humanity of the men from Amoy; like all human beings, some individuals among them would sink, and some would swim.

Today, family historians are gradually reclaiming these lives, revealing lineages and legacies long hidden. To revisit the Amoy men now is not simply to recover forgotten names, but to acknowledge how their journeys and labours shaped the colonial world and continue to shape what it means to belong in Australia.

This work has endeavoured to provide a more nuanced glimpse of the past that perhaps does not provide the kind of self-satisfied contrast with ourselves that leads to funding for memorials. Those who actually lived this history deserve better.

Vignette XIII - Naturalizations



MEMORIAL, OR APPLICATION FOR A CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION.

By His Excellency the Right Honorable Sir John Young, Baronet, Knight Commander of the Most Honorable Order of the Bath, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George, Captain General and Governor-in-Chief of the Colony of New South Wales, and Vice-Admiral of the same.

1.—The Memorial of William Edward Oram Chi

of Scone respectfully sheweth,

that your Memorialist is a native of* Amoy, China

2.—That your Memorialist is Thirty one years of age, and

is† a Confectioner by Trade

A standard form to become a British subject.

Naturalizations

By the late 1850s and early 1860s, the Amoy men had all completed their five-year contracts and were free to move and work as they pleased. What did they do with this freedom in the second stage of their new lives in the Australian colonies? A small cache of naturalization applications from this crucial period provides us with a snapshot of what some at least were doing—mostly within ten years of their arrival and five years of their achieving freedom from indenture.[287]

Tow and John Toop are a pair of Amoy men who together arrived in 1849 on the *Duke of Roxburgh* and took up work with Arthur Hodgson a prominent squatter on the Darling Downs. They both applied for naturalization in 1859 after having "by their own care and industry" acquired property around Drayton. Their former contractor, Arthur Hodgson, wrote in support of their applications and described them as "worthy of the privilege".[288]

James Tankoe (Tanko) first applied for naturalization in 1860 when he was a storekeeper on the Rocky River goldfields near Armidale. In his 1868 application, he said he was a butcher and stated he could not remember his ship's name but thought he arrived in December 1849. Both applications claim James to be a man of "some magnitude" and "considerable property".[289]

Scotchy Koo was living in Tenterfield when he applied for naturalization in 1859. He stated that

he had arrived in 1849 and that he was a labourer and wished to purchase 5 acres of land. His solicitor described him as: “I believe, one of the most respectable of the inhabitants of Tenterfield”.[290]

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Acknowledgements

Any work of this kind owes much to a great many people; those who can be named and those who for various reasons cannot. Foremost is Maxine Darnell, whose pioneering work has been often referred to in this book. Close behind is Allison Leathart who discovered a new cache of sources and whose own family history related research is as tireless as it is inspiring. Allison is also to be commended for her very keen proofreading skills.

Also to be gratefully appreciated are a long list of family historians whose contributions are continuing. These must include Linda Coonan, whose administration of an Amoy descendants Facebook group has been of especial value in gathering contacts and sources. Other family researchers include Leiza Hendricks, Renee Buckley and Rhoda Copeland. There are many more and it is to be hoped that one day their efforts can be gathered into a work focusing on the individuals and families of the Amoy migration.

Much of this research has included field trips and a good field trip always results in meeting helpful people willing to share their time and knowledge. In Australia, that has included among many others, Cynthia Berthelsen of the Gayndah Museum and Michael U of Kerry, Queensland. In Xiamen the list of generous academics includes Director Lin Cui-ru, Dr. Hu Yueyun, Professor Shen Huifen, and Jallo Tang.

Back in Australia, mention must also be made of artist Pamela See whose efforts to bring the history of the Amoy men to a wider audience are to be commended. While from Taiwan, thanks must go to Ichi Chen for his assistance in the Chinese title of this book.

Finally, I wish to thank my wife, Mei-Su Chen, whose companionship, support and assistance in so many ways cannot be adequately conveyed here.

Of course, all errors are entirely my own.

28

Vignette XIV - William Beacham

Sofala is reputed to be the oldest gold mining town in NSW with many surviving buildings.

William Beacham was only 23 years old when he applied to be naturalized as a British subject in 1861. Having arrived on the *Royal Saxon* in 1853, he was one of a small group who had been contracted by Robert Towns to dig for gold for his Colonial Gold Company. On the expiration of his five-year contract he moved to the Sofala goldfields, stating he had been resident there since February 1858 and was continuing his occupation which was "by trade a gold digger".[291]

According to historian Juanita Kwok: "Beacham established himself as a storekeeper and interpreter in Sofala, married Agnes Fanning in 1864 and began a family. In the 1870s after Agnes died in Sofala, Beacham moved to Bathurst, where he ran a store at 105 George Street whilst maintaining a forty-year career as a court interpreter. He remarried and had a large family."[292]

William died in 1909 aged 73 and his obituary reads:

Mr. William Beacham, a well-known and respected resident of Bathurst, passed away at his residence, George-street, yesterday. The deceased gentleman, who was 73 years of age, was the oldest Government Chinese interpreter in the State, having served in that capacity for 40 years. In the early days of the Turon goldfield he carried on a store-keeping and gold-buying business there, but later on came to Bathurst and opened a store which he carried on up to the time of his death, a period of about 40 years. The late Mr. Beacham is survived by a widow and four sons and two daughters.[293]

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Appendix - On Chinese: names, languages, romanisations and things

Chinese is, of course, written with Chinese characters, and therefore for those who do not read them various systems have been contrived to present things in alphabetical systems more familiar to English speakers/readers. Unfortunately, these systems have not been consistent and variations abound. In addition, while Chinese characters can convey meaning irrespective of the language or dialect spoken, alphabetical renderings, focused as they are on sounds, cannot. That "Chinese" is in fact a great many languages and dialects adds to the possible variations.

Thus, the Chinese characters 廈門 will represent the same place to Chinese speakers of Mandarin, Hokkien or Cantonese. While the phonetic rendering of these pronunciations will give you Xiamen (Hsia-men), Amoy or occasionally Hamun. That "Amoy" dominated is merely because that was what those who lived in Amoy in the 19th century most heard and used. Now that Mandarin dominates, Xiamen has begun to be better known internationally—unless you are reading older texts.

Similar examples are presented throughout this work but hopefully this basic explanation will see you through.

An additional wrinkle is the rendering of people's names, which faced the difficulty that people of European heritage seemed to always have with the idea that a family name could precede a personal name. This, in addition to inconsistent pronunciations and spellings, dialect variations across Fujian, and of course the adoption of European names, results in a wide possible range of Chinese Australian names that are not always easily recognised as Chinese at all.

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Vignette XV - William Kongce Cooey

William Kongce Cooey – a rare image of a man from Amoy

William Kongce Cooey arrived in Sydney in 1850, when about 21 years of age, but began working in what became southern Queensland. He soon after appeared in court at Gayndah in 1851 as a witness to a murder when he required an interpreter.[294] A few years after this, William married

Anne McAteer and together they raised a large family. He also became naturalized in 1863.[295]

Life however was not smooth for the couple. William was gaoled for receiving stolen goods.[296] Anne, too, was charged for signing a dishonoured promissory note and a few years later with assault, though this charge was dismissed.[297] Around this period, Anne "was found outside the walls in a state of intoxication, and engaged in the rather romantic occupation of singing love songs to her 'poor lost Johnny,' who was so cruelly kept in confinement ..."[298]

Not long after this both parents were in gaol at the same time, resulting in what must have been a pathetic courtroom scene:

> *Five children belonging to a Chinaman named Cooey appeared in the dock yesterday forenoon charged with vagrancy. The children stated their father and mother were in gaol, and that they had no means of obtaining a livelihood. They were remanded for eight days.*[299]

Yet this was not the worst for the family as three of their children, all girls, died young in a series of tragic accidents. One was accidentally shot by her brother while hunting, another died after being dragged behind a horse that bolted, and a third when a well collapsed and she was crushed by a falling water trough.[300]

Despite these troubles the couple were able to acquire property which appears to have been in Anne's name.[301] William outlived his wife Anne by 11 years before he died at Toowoomba in 1902, aged 75.[302]

Their youngest daughter, born 2 March 1875 and also known as Annie, married three times. Her first two husbands were Cantonese men apparently from Hongsau (likely modern Zhuhai): Ah Tai Low Ginn in 1889, and Chow Mew Gow in 1895.[303] The descendants from the third marriage, to John McNamee, inherited the locket in which the image of William was preserved.[304] It was Annie who also erected the gravestone to her parents now at Toowoomba Cemetery and it is also from this Annie via another branch that Renee Buckley descends.[305]

31

Recommended reading

Bibliographies can be forbiddingly long lists. Here are a few works of especial interest if you are inspired to follow this history a little further as a result of having read this far.

For an in-depth account

Maxine Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853: An exposition of motives and outcomes, PhD thesis, UNE, 1997.

Specific to an area (southern Queensland)

Margaret Slocomb, *Among Australia's pioneers: Chinese indentured pastoral workers on the Northern Frontier 1848 to c.1880* (Balboa press, 2014).

Family history (old but still more to be done)

Monica Tankey, "A blueprint for action", *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No.6. July 1981, pp.189-195.

A couple of individuals

Howard Le Couteur, "Chinese engagement with colonial Queensland society: James (Con) Chiam of Maryborough, and Thomas Ashney of Gayndah", *Queensland History Journal*, Volume 25, No. 4, February 2023, pp.315-325.

Fujian diaspora

Soon Keong Ong, *Coming Home to a Foreign Country: Xiamen and Returned Overseas Chinese, 1843-1938*, Cornell University Press, 2021.

More on the Riot

Chin Keong Ng, The Amoy Riots of 1852: Coolie Emigration and Sino-British Relations in *Boundaries and Beyond: China's Maritime Southeast in Late Imperial Times*, NUS, 2017.

Beyond the Amoy men (Cantonese)

Michael Williams, *Returning Home with Glory*, HKU Press, 2019.

Mavis Gock Yen, *South Flows the Pearl*, Sydney University Press, 2022.

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Sources of Images

Image 1: Amoy shipping, 1853
Power, *Recollections of a three years' residence in China*, title page.

Image 2: The people of southern China
AI generated image based on description, see note 7.

Image 3: Map of Amoy, 1843
British Admiralty chart, Amoy Port, surveyed 1843.

Image 4: Attack on Amoy, 1841
Courtesy of Xiamen Overseas Chinese Museum.

Image 5: Paragraph establishing the Treaty Ports
From the Treaty of Nanjing, 1842.

Image 6: Heading for Davidson's proposal
Sydney Herald, Thursday 22 June 1837, p.4.

Image 7: NSW Attorney General John Plunkett
State Library of NSW, SL 1528443.

Image 8: William Charles Wentworth
State Library of NSW, DL PX 157.

Image 9: Ship from letterhead of Robert Towns [AI enhanced]
SLNSW, Robert Towns & Co. Papers 1828-1895,
MSS SET 307, Items 178–180.

Image 10: The two provinces of Guangdong and Fujian
ResearchGate; New Atlas of China: Far Eastern Geographical Establishment.

Image 11: A common sight during the gold rush [AI enhanced]
Based on Charles Lyall, 1854, SLib Vic H87.63/2/4

Image 12: Grave of Francis Darby Syme, Edinburgh
Wilkipedia article, Francis Darby Syme

Image 13: A Qing civil official of 5th rank
AI generated

Image 14: Imperial Commissioner to British Consul.
UK National Archives: FO663/51, Foreign Office: Consulate, Amoy, China: General Correspondence, 1834-1858.

Image 15: The *Salamander* – sent to Australia eventually
Australian War Memorial, No.302265

Image 16: Sir John Bowring, Governor of Hong Kong
National Portrait Gallery, London

Image 17: H.M.S. Hermes
Wilkipedia article, HMS *Hermes*

Image 18: Court of Inquiry
House of Commons Sessional Papers, Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, Inclosure 8 in No. 14.

Image 19: Enticing workers (from a later period)
Courtesy of Xiamen Overseas Chinese Museum.

Image 20: Hinterland of Xiamen within 1-2 days walk
Google maps

Image 21: Rev. J. Doty, American missionary at Amoy
Wilkipedia article, Elihu Doty

Image 22: Model of barque *Emigrant*
By James Hall, seaman on 1850 voyage. Photo by descendant, Jim Fenwick - https://www.emigrantship.com.au/the-ship

Image 23: Part of correspondence between Zhao and Consul
UK National Archives: FO663/55-56, Imperial Commissioner Zhao, 30th November 1852.

Image 24: Syme's house in Edinburgh
Authors' photo

Image 25: Map of the Colony of NSW, 1850
NLA: MAP T 85/2. London : Pubd. by John Arrowsmith, 10 Soho Square, 1st Jany. 1850.

Image 26: Contract the *Spartan*, 11 October, 1851.

SLNSW: Papers of Robert Towns & Co, 1828-1895, MSS SET 307, Items 178 – 180, Spartan contract.

Image 27: *Eleanor Lancaster* advertisement
The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser, 13 March 1852, p.3.

Image 28: 1 Mexican dollar = 4 shillings
Coin in authors possession

Image 29: Shepherd on alert at a sentry box
State Library of NSW: PXA 538/vol. 2, Sketch Book of Andrew Bonar

Image 30: The Avengers
Illustration titled 'The Avengers', Wilson, *Rambles at the Antipodes*, p.40.

Image 31: Memorial at Christmas Creek
Authors' photo

Image 32: Absconding rewards were numerous
Morton Bay Courier, Monday 23 December 1850, p.1.
Morton Bay Free Press, Thursday 12 February 1852, p.1.

Image 33: William Lawson – an employer of Amoy men on contracts.
Courtesy of Blue Mountains City Library, *William Lawson*.

Image 34: W. C. Wentworth – treated Amoy men poorly.
State Library of NSW, FL1810966.

Image 35: Excerpt from Ang's defence
State Library of NSW: Aw 43/Item 2

Image 36: Ang's defence – written
State Library of NSW: Aw 43/Item 2

Image 37: Ang's defence – illustrated
State Library of NSW: Aw 43/Item 2

Image 38: Advertisement for a multilingual interpreter
The Sydney Morning Herald, Monday 5 April 1852, p.4.

Image 39: Lim Soon and Lo Chai
AI generated from the written description

Image 40: Governor Thomas Denison
Australian Dictionary of Biography, Sir Thomas Denison

Image 41: Model of a Macau lorcha
Courtesy of the Macau Musuem

Image 42: Tim Tie – a later arriving Amoy man? [AI enhanced]
Qld State Archives, DR17247, Tim Tie, March 1886

Image 43: Memorial to Amoy Shepherds, St George
Balonne Shire Council, St George Region website

Image 44: White headstone, St George Cemetery
Info51: 澳公墓竟悼念**300**无名华人 **170**年前逃荒来放羊

Image 45: Restored family graves, Gayndah. Law & Ping
Authors photo, Gayndah Cemetery

Image 46: Modern Xiamen
Authors photo, Xiamen, 2025

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Sources of Vignettes

I Thomas Danswan: Courtesy of Allison Leathart

II Kimboo: Queensland Figaro, Saturday 20 January 1883, p.6.

III Thomas Coto: Photo taken by author

IV William Edward Oram Chi: Courtesy of Elaine Hetherington

V John Gor Tuyan: Courtesy of Rhoda Copeland

VI John Tan Kee: Courtesy of Tankey family collection

VII John Chay: Courtesy of Gayndah Musuem

VIII Thomas Ashney: Photo taken by author

IX Tom (Thomas) Gam: Courtesy of Helene Shepherd

X Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich: State Library Queensland 2 291127

XI Signatures: Naturalization applications, see footnote

XII John Kim: Courier Mail, September 6, 2019

XIII Naturalizations: NSW State Archives, Col. Sec

XIV William Beacham: Photo taken by author

XV William Kongu Cooey (AI enhanced): Courtesy of McNamee family collection

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Author Bio

Michael Williams is a graduate of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), a scholar of Chinese-Australian history and a founding member of the Chinese Australian Historical Society. He is the author of *Returning Home with Glory*, HKU Press, 2018, which traces the history of peoples from south China's Pearl River Delta around the Pacific Ports of Sydney, Hawaii and San Francisco. Michael has taught at Beijing Foreign Studies University and Peking University and is a former Adjunct Professor at Western Sydney University. His website: *Chinese Australian History in 88 Objects* was shortlisted for the 2022 Premiers Digital History Prize and his most recent books include *Australia's Dictation Test: The Test it was a Crime to Fail*, Brill, 2021 & *Every Requisite for a Campaign upon the Gold-fields: Organisation, Victimisation and Mythmaking of the Walk from Robe*, Ashfield, NSW: ChideStudy Press, 2024. Michael is currently developing a national database of Chinese Australian history called: *Scattered Legacy* / 澳華僑海集珍.

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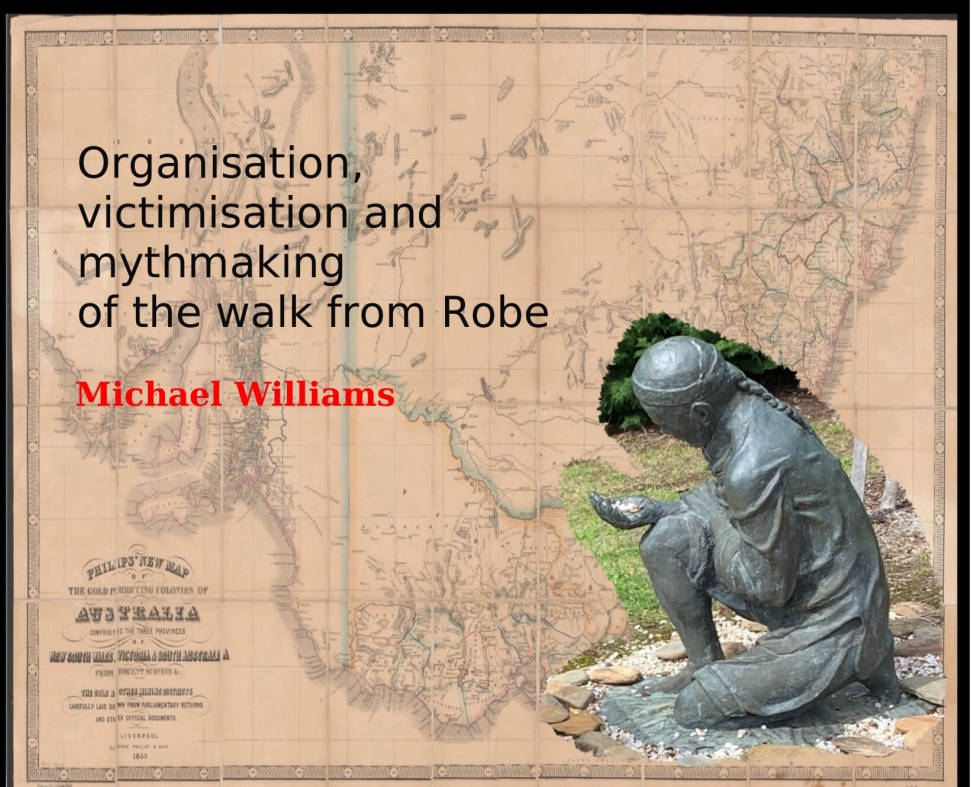

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pieces often tell us more about the writers than those being observed – although this too can be useful. Nevertheless, amid this diverse material can be found many instances of careful and interesting observation – even when it is patronising (and/or ignorant). Personal observation when sincerely given can provide much of value.

Presented here is a small selection of the abundant amount of such material to be found scattered throughout 19th century Australian sources. The selections range from the comments of a naive English teacher to those of an experienced China consul. From eyewitness to the arrival of the first 150 Chinese gold seekers to pass through Bathurst in 1855, as well as the astonished spectator to a Chinese opera. Not to mention the creations of the authors of both *Mary Poppins* and *The Man from Snowy River*. Of course, these sections would not be complete with reports from one each of those instant experts – the journalist and the travel writer.

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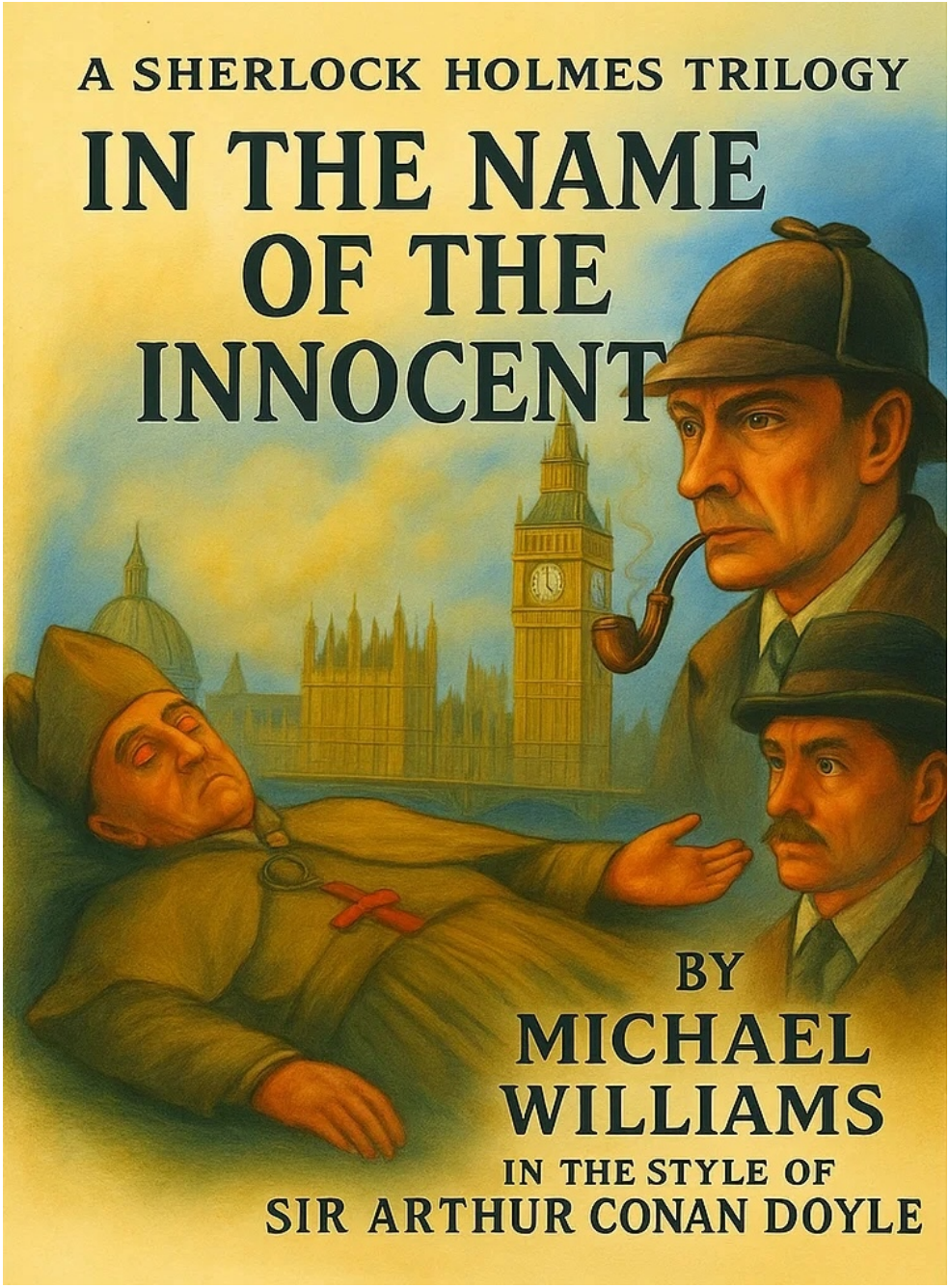

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Notes

1. A restless and refractory disposition

1 Formerly transliterated as Fuhkeen. "Amoy" is based on the local language of Fujian while "Xiamen" on the Mandarin language pronunciation of the same characters. See Appendix for more details on things Chinese.

2 For just how fake, see Michael Williams, *Australia's Dictation Test: The Test it was a Crime to Fail*, Brill, 2021.

3 For a general overview of the Fujian diaspora see Soon Keong Ong, *Coming Home to a Foreign Country: Xiamen and Returned Overseas Chinese, 1843-1938*, Cornell University Press, 2021.

4 Particular note should be taken of the excellent pioneering research by Maxine Darnell, *The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853: An exposition of motives and outcomes*, PhD thesis, UNE, 1997.

5 It needs to be remembered that at this stage the Colony of NSW included the territories of what later became the colonies of Victoria and Queensland. Victoria separating in 1851 and Queensland in 1859.

6 Modern Australian spelling is Naturalised/Naturalisation based on the belief that this is British while Naturalized/Naturalization is American. In fact, both were used in 19th century Australia and Naturalized/Naturalization on official documents. I have therefore used Naturalized/Naturalization throughout this text.

7 Harry Parkes, Canton, September, 1852, General remarks on Chinese Emigration, *Papers Relative to Emigration to the Australian colonies*, House of Lords, Volume: XVII, 1853, p.91.

Vignette I - Thomas Danswan

8 Unless otherwise stated all information is provided by Allison Leathart, a descendent of Thomas Danswan.

9 *Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, Thursday 26 March 1863, p.1.

10 According to Allison Leathart at least one of Danswan descendants died of hemochromatosis which can be of genetic origin, the symptoms of which could be mistaken for cancer of the stomach and liver.

2. From Treaty Port to Sheep Station

11 W. Tyrone Power, *Recollections of a three years' residence in China : including peregrinations in Spain, Morocco, Egypt, India, Australia, and New Zealand*, London : Richard Bentley, 1853, p.482. The figure of 400,000 may be an exaggeration, but it was substantial nonetheless.

12 W. Tyrone Power, *Recollections of a three years' residence in China : including peregrinations in Spain, Morocco, Egypt, India, Australia, and New Zealand*, London : Richard Bentley, 1853, p.122.

13 *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 2 April 1842, p.4.

14 Guangzhou (the city) and Guangdong (the province) were both often referred to as Canton.

15 Note by Dr Winchester, British Consulate, Amoy, August 26, 1852. Inclosure 3 in No. 8. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.9.

16 Nanking was an older form of romanisation for the same city and the same Chinese characters – 南京.

17 The Straits Settlements were a loose grouping of British settlements including Penang, Malacca and Singapore still under the East India Company at this time.

18 Note by Dr Winchester, British Consulate, Amoy, August 26, 1852. Inclosure 3 in No. 8. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, pp.9-10.

19 Four Chinese workers were also reported to the west of the Blue Mountains in 1830, Andrew Brown journals, B968, NSW State Library, quoted in Ian Jack, "Some less familiar aspects of the Chinese in 19th-Century Australia", in *Chan, Henry, Curthoys, Ann, Chiang, Nora, (Eds), The overseas Chinese in Australasia: history, settlement and interactions: proceedings, Australian National University, Centre for the Study of the Chinese Southern Diaspora, 2001*, p.49.

20 *Launceston Advertiser*, Monday 26 July 1830, p.2.

21 For a discussion of the direct link with Amoy men and attitudes to Cantonese goldseekers see Sophie Loy-

Wilson, Coolie Alibis: Seizing Gold from Chinese Miners in New South Wales, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 2017, Vol.91, pp.28-45. For the role of Chinese in the development of the White Australia policy see, Michael Williams, *Australia's Dictation Test: The Test it was a Crime to Fail*, Brill, 2021.

22 *Launceston Advertiser*, Monday 2 August 1830, p.2.

23 Labelling everyone from the Qing Empire "Chinese" was a European convention, though "Tartars" and "Mongolians" were also recognised as distinct people even if such labels were if often misapplied. If "Chinese" people wished to identify themselves in general terms "People of Tang" was used, while nowadays Han is the favoured term.

24 Robert Towns was told in 1847 of a number of people sent from Singapore to South Australia as domestic servants. *Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 30 January 1847, p.2.

25 *The Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List*, Saturday 18 April 1846, p.109.

26 "Coolies" is likely a Tamil word for labourer and not of Chinese origin despite the (made up) etymology of 苦力 ku li, literally "bitter strength", which only works in Mandarin pronunciation, the least likely language to have been used in this period by those involved. See, *The Empire*, Monday 24 November 1851, p.3 where in debate two members of the NSW Legislative Council refer to "coolies" and "Chinese" as distinct. Though British officials in Amoy and Hong Kong at this time usually refer to indentured Chinese as "coolies".

27 Squatters is the term for large land holders who had taken over nominally Crown (government) actually indigenous land, and were using it for agricultural (mostly running sheep) purposes. Chinese men rather than men from India may have been due to the reluctance of the British government of India to allow such contracting, at least at that point in time.

28 *Sydney Herald*, Thursday 22 June 1837, p.4.

29 *Sydney Herald*, Thursday 22 June 1837, p.4.

30 *Sydney Herald*, Thursday 22 June 1837, p.4.

31 *Sydney Herald*, Thursday 22 June 1837, p.4.

32 *Sydney Herald*, Thursday 22 June 1837, p.4.

33 *Sydney Herald*, Thursday 22 June 1837, p.4.

34 *The Sydney Monitor*, Monday 19 June 1837, p.3.

35 *The Sydney Monitor*, Friday 14 September 1838, p.3. His death - *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, Tuesday 26 February 1839, p.3.

36 *Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 21 October 1848, p.4.

37 *Sydney Chronicle*, Saturday 19 June 1847, p.2.

38 *The Empire*, Monday 24 November 1851, p.3.

39 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, Friday 20 August 1847, pp.21-23.

40 *Master and Servants Act 1847* As with any law, interpretation is key and some attempted to argue that Chinese people were savages and therefore not bound by the Act, see *The Argus*, Tuesday 10 April 1849, p.4.

Vignette II - Kimboo

41 The first to write on Kimboo was Karen B, A Strange Man in a Strange Land, https://moretonbayandmore.com/2024/04/21/a-strange-man-in-a-strange-land/ April, 2024.

42 *Empire*, Saturday 25 August 1860, p.3.

43 *Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser*, Saturday 11 March 1871, p.2.

44 *Queensland Figaro*, Saturday 20 January 1883, p.6.

45 Death Certificate, Kimboo, 1893/C/3688.

3. He made lots of money by the venture

46 Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853, p.113.

47 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Tuesday 23 March 1847, p.3.

48 The most exhaustive examination of the sources on numbers who arrived is that by Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853, Appendix 5, pp.322-329.

49 Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853, p.118.

50 These figures are based on Darnell, Appendix 5. For slightly different numbers see also, Emigration of Contract Labourers to Sydney from 1848 to date, Despatches relating to Chinese Immigrants into Colonies of British Guiana and Trinidad, House of Commons Papers, Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.134.

51 American Diplomatic and Public Papers: The United States and China, Vol. 17, 'The Coolie Trade and Chinese Emigration', Delaware, Scholarly Resources Inc., (n.d), pp.180 & 182-3.

52 *Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 18 March 1854, p.3. Known as Singapore Terrace in Melbourne. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, it was this same Fyfe who is credited with proposing the tonnage limit that became part of Victoria's restrictions on Chinese immigration. *The Argus*, Saturday 2 June 1855, p.5.

53 Chinese Immigrants, *The Argus*, Tuesday 26 December 1848, p.2. "Klings" were Tamils or from southern India.

54 *The Argus*, Tuesday 10 April 1849, p.4.

55 C. J. Latrobe, 11 July 1849 to Colonial Secretary, Sydney, Despatches relative to Emigration to Australian Colonies. Part I. New South Wales, House of Commons, No: 347 347-II, Volume Page: XL.1.

56 For details see, Wang Sing-wu, *The Organisation of Chinese Emigration 1848–1888: with special reference to Chinese Emigration to Australia* (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1978), pp.5–6, cites a case of the use of credit-tickets in 1794 and of its use generally in Singapore in the 1820s and 1830s; see pp.90–91 for an account of the "ticket" itself and pp.112 for written contracts that were "given up" due to British regulations.

57 Juanita Kwok, *The Chinese in Bathurst: Recovering Forgotten Histories*, Doctoral thesis, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, 2018, p.52.

58 *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, Saturday 10 December 1853, p.2 & *The Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List*, Monday 15 May 1854, p.87.

59 Dr. Bowring to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, July 16, 1852. Inclosure 4. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.3.

60 Consul Elmslie to Dr. Bowring, Canton, August 25, 1852. Inclosure 1 in No. 8. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.7.

61 The phrase "Gold Mountain" is in fact a now ubiquitous translation for these Chinese characters but was originally a translation choice over the more accurate, if prosaic "goldfields". This is a preference that sought to make exotic what for Europeans was considered normal – namely, rushing to goldfields. While Gold Mountain is an attractive term good for titles of novels and films it should be noted that it plays a part in that "othering" of Chinese people that began in this period. Now firmly embedded in contemporary discourse it is used here and elsewhere with reservation.

62 Dr. Bowring to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, September 13, 1852. Inclosure 7. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.6.

63 *Hobarton Guardian, or, True Friend of Tasmania*, Saturday 11 March 1854, p.3.

64 *The Argus*, Friday 24 March 1854, p.4.

Vignette III - Thomas Coto

65 *Gippsland Times*, Tuesday 20 September 1870, p.3.

66 *Gippsland Times*, Saturday 2 September 1871, p.2.

67 *Gippsland Times*, Wednesday 20 June 1883, p.3.

4. By the prospect of minute advantage

68 Chinese Immigration by Paul Pax, No. III, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 13 March 1852, p.2. For a subsequent examination of the credibility of Paul Pax's observations of Amoy see, An Old Amoy Resident, *Sydney Morning Herald*, Monday 8 May 1854, p.3.

69 Much of this correspondence between officials and the Foreign Office was duplicated and presented to the British Parliament. See, House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53. Correspondence in Chinese was preserved in the files and are now in the British National Archives, Kew, London, especially FO663.

70 "除暴所以安良" FO663/51, No.17, Imperial Commissioner to British Consul, Xiamen, 20 November 1852.

71 Chinese Labourers, *The Melbourne Argus*, Friday 5 May 1848, p.4.

72 Chinese Labourers, *The Melbourne Argus*, Friday 5 May 1848, p.4. "Shirtings" being the cloth from which shirts were commonly made.

73 Layton also thought the process was "beneficial" to the "coolies" themselves as it could "place them in the way of an honest and decent livelihood". T. H. Layton, British Consulate Amoy to J. G. Bonham, 17th July 1848 in Papers relative to Emigration Part I. Australian Colonies, House of Commons Papers, House of Commons No: 593 593-II, Volume: XXXVIII, p.102, 1849.

74 T. H. Layton, British Consulate Amoy to J G. Bonham, 17th July 1848 in Papers relative to Emigration Part I. Australian Colonies, House of Commons Papers, House of Commons No: 593 593-II, Volume: XXXVIII, pp.100-102, 1849.

75 T. H. Layton, British Consulate Amoy to J G. Bonham, 17th July 1848 in Papers relative to Emigration Part I. Australian Colonies, House of Commons Papers, House of Commons No: 593 593-II, Volume: XXXVIII, pp.100-102, 1849.

76 That apprehensions concerning this trade were not confined to the citizens of Amoy is confirmed by a comment from John Bowring a few months before these riots: "One father who had lost four sons - his whole race - who had gone forth in search of treasure, has already checked the emigrating disposition of a little district by his influence." Dr. Bowring to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, May 17, 1852. Inclosure 2. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.2.

77 "I do not think the circumstances so forcibly depicted by Mr. Layton are likely to ensue ...". J. G. Bonham to The Viscount Palmerston, Victoria, Hong Kong, 10 October 1848 in Papers relative to Emigration Part I. Australian Colonies, House of Commons Papers, House of Commons No: 593 593-II, Volume: XXXVIII, p.100, 1849.

78 Dr. Bowring to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, October 1, 1852. No. 9. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.19.

79 As his ship's surgeon Henry Bland reported it: "Applied the usual dressings necessary in a case of punctured wounds, or wounds inflicted with a sword, bayonet, spear, or other pointed instrument." Appendix (I). House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, Certificate by Mr. Bland, p.75. Despite the ship's name it only carried "coolies" to Trinidad rather than to NSW.

80 Zhao's full title was: 大清欽命福建分巡興泉永海防兵備道 趙 "Imperially Appointed Circuit Intendant of Fujian, in charge of patrolling Xinghua, Quanzhou, and Yongchun, responsible for coastal defence and military supplies — Zhao."

81 FO663/51, No.18, Imperial Commissioner to British Consul, Xiamen, 20 November 1852.

82 Translation author's with AI assistance.

83 FO663/51, No.19, Imperial Commissioner to British Consul, Xiamen, 29 November 1852.

84 Translation author's with AI assistance.

85 FO663/57-58, various letters Imperial Commissioner to British Consul, Xiamen,1852.

86 Acting-Consul Backhouse to Dr. Bowring, Amoy, November 27, 1852. Inclosure 1 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.34.

87 It should be noted that Syme was not directly involved with the NSW trade and also that Bowering at least thought Sydney was not a destination that needed to be lied about. The Amoy protests were against the trade generally and while the NSW trade could perhaps be seen to be marginally better, this is off a very low bar and not one the people of Amoy could be expected to take much consideration of.

88 Dr. Bowring to Consul Sullivan, Hong Kong, August 3, 1852, Inclosure 5. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.5.

89 The *Hermes* along with the *Salamander* were just returned from duty in the Second Anglo-Burmese war.

90 Backhouse had described a plundering mob put down by British troops. Bowring either had other sources, could read between the lines, or both.

91 Dr. Bowring to Acting-Consul Backhouse, Hong Kong, December 9, 1852. Inclosure 2 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.35.

92 Acting-Consul Backhouse to Dr. Bowring, Amoy, December 18, 1852. Inclosure 4 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.36.

93 *Minutes of Consular Court at Amoy. Queen versus Syme.* Inclosure 5 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, pp.37-38.

Vignette IV - William Edward Oram Chi

94 *The Empire*, Friday 23 August 1861, p.1.

95 State Archives NSW: Col Sec 64/1255.

96 *The Mercury*, Thursday 23 March 1865, p.2.

97 *New South Wales Government Gazette*, Friday 21 December 1883 [Issue No.545], p.7015.

4. cont... The Court of Inquiry

98 Mr. Harvey to Dr. Bowring, Hong Kong, December 22, 1852. Inclosure 7 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.39.

99 Mr. Harvey to Dr. Bowring, Hong Kong, December 22, 1852. Inclosure 7 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.41.

100 *Minutes of Evidence taken at a Court of Inquiry held at Amoy to investigate the Causes of the late Riots, and into the manner in which Coolie Emigration has been lately carried on at that Port.* Inclosure 8 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.58.

101 Mr. Harvey to Dr. Bowring, Hong Kong, December 22, 1852. Inclosure 7 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.41.

102 The *Emigrant* originally brought emigrants out from Britain to Moreton Bay. Suffering a high death rate, many of its passengers are buried at Dunwich where are also buried many Amoy men (see Vignette X). For more on the *Emigrant's* first voyage see, Jane Smith, *Ship of Death: The Tragedy of the 'Emigrant'*, Carindale, Queensland : Independent Ink, 2019.

103 *Minutes of Evidence taken at a Court of Inquiry held at Amoy to investigate the Causes of the late Riots, and into the manner in which Coolie Emigration has been lately carried on at that Port*, Monday, December 13, 1852. Inclosure 8 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.45.

104 *Proclamation issued by the Scholars and Merchants of Amoy.* A true translation, M. C. Morrison, Appendix (A). House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.71.

105 Commander Fishbourne to Captain Massie, "Hermes," Hong Kong, December 21, 1852. Inclosure 1 in No. 17. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.88.

106 All quotes in the following section are from *Minutes of Evidence taken at a Court of Inquiry held at Amoy to investigate the Causes of the late Riots, and into the manner in which Coolie Emigration has been lately carried on at that Port.* Inclosure 8 in No. 14. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, pp.44-81, and all page references are from this source unless otherwise stated.

107 Fuhkien being the older romanisation of Fujian (福建).

108 Note by Dr Winchester, British Consulate, Amoy, August 26, 1852. Inclosure 3 in No. 8. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.12.

Vignette V - John Gor Tuyan

109 Register of Births, Dalby, 1870, No.279/1483, Margaret Tuyan. Deaths in District of Brisbane, 1893, No.25693, John Gor Tuyan. This and most of the information here generously supplied by Rhoda Copeland. The death certificate also records his arrival in Queensland as 1856, which is unlikely to have been the year of his arrival in Australia.

110 Marriage Certificate of John Gor Tuyuan and Mary Smith, NSW Reg No.1862/3129.

111 *Toowoomba Chronicle and Queensland Advertiser*, Sat 9 March 1867, p.3 & Saturday, 22 June, 1867, p.3.

112 *The Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, Thursday 15 August 1867, p.2.

113 *Toowoomba Chronicle and Queensland Advertiser*, Saturday 7 September 1867, p.3.

114 Register of Births, Dalby, 1872, No.306/1805, Gor Jim Tuyan. John is recorded here as a shepherd but this is probably referring to his original occupation on arrival.

115 *Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser*, Saturday 27 November 1886, p.2.

116 Qld Marriage registration, 1889/13316, Susan Tuyan; Qld Marriage registration, 1889/13681, Margaret Tuyan.

117 Deaths in District of Brisbane, 1893, No.25693, John Gor Tuyuan.

118 NSW Death Certificate, 1924/005902, Susan Jane Lockey.

119 Deaths in District of Brisbane, 1893, No.25693, John Gor Tuyuan. His daughter Margaret also died of stomach cancer in 1928, NSW Death Certificate, 1928/9318, Margaret Williamson.

4. cont... Conditions

120 FO663/55-56, Imperial Commissioner Zhao, 30th November 1852.

121 *The Hobart Town Advertiser*, 10 September 1852, p.2.

Vignette VI - John Tan Kee

122 Unless otherwise stated all the information here is from Monica Tankey, "A blueprint for action", *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, No.6. July 1981, pp.189-195. Monica Tankey should be commended as a pioneer in Chinese Australian history this being one of the earliest examples. Monica makes an appeal for more such research that has only gradually been taken up since.

123 *The Carcoar Chronicle*, Friday 20 June 1902, p.2.

5. This outlandish description of labourers

124 Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853, Appendix 5, pp.322-329. The *Emigrant* caused much dismay when 20 died on its voyage in 1850 carrying mainly Irish emigrants, see note 102.

125 This ship had in 1850 been the first to arrive in San Francisco with Australian colonists heading to the California goldrush. The Maritime Heritage Project ~ San Francisco 1846-1899.

126 *The Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List*, 13 March 1852, p.75.

127 'Memoranda of the Voyage from Plymouth to Sydney Commencing Monday March 17 1851' by W. D. P. Swain, Ca. 1851-1852, 1851, March 1852, p.118. State Library of NSW, B 1654.

128 'Memoranda of the Voyage from Plymouth to Sydney Commencing Monday March 17 1851' by W. D. P. Swain, Ca. 1851-1852, 1851, March 1852, p.118. State Library of NSW, B 1654. Swains writing is very hard to decipher at times.

129 'Memoranda of the Voyage from Plymouth to Sydney Commencing Monday March 17 1851' by W. D. P. Swain, Ca. 1851-1852, 1851, p.118. State Library of NSW, B 1654.

130 'Memoranda of the Voyage from Plymouth to Sydney Commencing Monday March 17 1851' by W. D. P. Swain, Ca. 1851-1852, 1851, p.118. State Library of NSW, B 1654.

131 *The Argus*, 29 March 1853, p.4 from the *Straits Times*, 1st February, 1853

132 *Adelaide Morning Chronicle*, 15 March 1853, p.4, from the *Singapore Free Press*, 28th January, 1853.

133 A comparison of a *Spartan* contract and one from the *Robert Bowne* reveals a stark difference. In any case Bowering at least did not consider Sydney to be one of the destinations requiring deception.

134 Dr. Bowring to the Earl of Malmesbury, Hong Kong, May 17, 1852. Inclosure 2. House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.2.

135 *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 20 March 1852, p.2. This was the same Attorney General, John Plunkett, who had opposed the amendments to the Masters and Servants Act that had facilitated the importation of indentured labourers such as the deceased.

136 *The Empire*, 4 March 1852, p.2.

137 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 March 1852, p.2.

138 *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 14 April 1852, p.2. Regarding names, in general, the shipping reports of their arrival only refer to numbers of "Chinese Immigrants" or "Chinese coolies" and it is usually not until they perhaps made their mark on society that we begin to get names and a sense of individuals. An exception, apart from the unfortunate Ti Ko, is provided by a surviving passenger list from one ship, the *Royal Saxon*. This ship arrived in Melbourne in early 1853 with 224 Chinese immigrants from Amoy, and provides us with Ou Chow, The Goh, Lochi, Topi and many more. See, VPRS 947/P0000, Jan – Mar 1853, Passenger List, *Royal Saxon*, Port of Melbourne, 26 January 1853. The most likely "mark" after arrival was a court appearance and for a table of over 300 names drawn from these and other sources see, Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853, Appendix 6, Chinese Labourers and Employers Identified New South Wales, pp.221-367.

139 *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 16 June 1852, p.2.

140 Melbourne became the capital of the separate Colony of Victoria in 1851 and Maryborough part of the Colony of Queensland in 1859.

141 *Empire*, 10 February 1853, p.2.

142 For examples of such contracts see: SLNSW, Ac 71, Chinese labourer's agreement, 11 October 11, 1851, Tsoa Oa and T. B. Simpson; Appendix (E), House of Commons Sessional Papers, "Correspondence with the Superintendent of British trade in China, upon the subject of emigration from that country", Volume: LXVIII, 1852-53, p.78, and also Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853, Appendix 7, pp.368-371.

143 SLNSW: Papers of Robert Towns & Co, 1828-1895, MSS SET 307, Items 178 – 180, Spartan contract.

144 Authors translation with AI assistance.

145 This would have worked out as £6 per year.

146 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 March 1852, p.2.

147 *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, 13 March 1852, p.3.

148 *The Melbourne Daily News and Port Phillip Patriot*, 4 November 1848, p.2.

149 Charles A. Winchester, British Consulate, Amoy, August 26, 1852, Papers Relative to Emigration to the Australian colonies, House of Lords, Volume: XVII, 1853, p.81.

150 Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales, p.263.

151 *The People's Advocate and New South Wales Vindicator*, Saturday 11 February 1854, p.1.

152 Maxine Darnell, "Responses and Reactions to the Importation of Indentured Chinese Labourers", No. 99-2 – November 1999, *Working Paper Series in Economic History*.

153 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Monday 14 January 1850, p.1. Quoted in Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853, p.127.

154 *Moreton Bay Free Press*, Thursday 11 March 1852, p.2. Quoted in Maxine Darnell, "Life and labour for indentured Chinese shepherds in New South Wales", 1847-55, *Journal of Australian Colonial History*, 6, 2004, p.157.

155 *The Argus*, 10 April 1849, p.4. The workers reported on here were a mixed group including "Malays" and the "Chinese" referred to may well have been Cantonese speakers rather than Amoy men.

156 *The Empire*, Tuesday 31 January 1854, p.3.

157 *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, Wednesday 29 September 1852, p.1.

158 Harry Gentle Resource Centre, Mapping Frontier Conflict in South-East Queensland

159 The evidence for this attack is based on oral tradition. For more examples, see Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales, pp.285-286.

160 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 17 April 1852, p.2.

161 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Tuesday 15 June 1852, p.1.

162 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 17 April 1852, p.2.

163 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 18 September 1852, p.2.

164 For an account of a lively debate at Ipswich which divided on class lines see, *The Moreton Bay Courier*, 14 January 1850, p.1. Quoted in Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales 1783-1853, p.127.

165 *The Empire*, Tuesday 24 November 1851, p.3.

166 For a discussion of this aspect see, Sophie Loy-Wilson, Coolie Alibis: Seizing Gold from Chinese Miners in New South Wales, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 2017, Vol.91, pp.28-45.

167 *The Brisbane Courier*, Wednesday 15 January 1868, p.4.

168 See Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales, p.209.

169 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 13 March 1852, p.3.

170 *The Empire*, Thursday 29 December 1853, p.4.

171 *The Empire*, Thursday 29 December 1853, p.4.

172 Jan Richardson, Harry Gentle Resource Centre, Dictionary of Biography, Griffith University, 2024.

173 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 25 September 1852, p.3.

174 *The Brisbane Courier*, Wednesday 15 January 1868, p.4.

175 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 23 October 1852, p.3 & *The Tasmanian Colonist*, Monday 29 November 1852, p.4.

176 *The People's Advocate and New South Wales Vindicator*, Saturday 15 May 1852, p.4.

Vignette VII - John Chay

177 *Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 25 November 1854, p.3.

178 State Archives Queensland, Naturalization Certificate, John Chay, 17th November 1860.

179 *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Wednesday 14 October 1942, p.5.

5. cont... Treatment

180 *The Empire*, Monday 18 October 1852, p.3

181 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 20 November 1852, p.4. In Hokkien亡 (bông) means "to perish".

182 *The Empire*, Monday 18 October 1852, p.3 & *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 25 September 1852, p.3

183 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 25 September 1852, p.3 ; *The Empire*, Monday 18 October 1852, p.3 ; *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 23 October 1852, p.3 & *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 20 November 1852, p.4. For more examples of violence against the Amoy men see Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales, pp.284-285.

184 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 3 April 1852, p.3.

185 Tinko may have been a Cantonese speaker as in another case he is reported not knowing the dialect of a witness. *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 15 November 1851, p.2.

186 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Tuesday 15 June 1852, p.1.

187 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 25 September 1852, p.3

188 See Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales, p.286 for examples.

189 *Moreton Bay Courier*, Monday 23 December 1850, p.1 ; *Moreton Bay Free Press*, Thursday 12 February 1852, p.1.

190 *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, Saturday 4 Dec 1852, p.2.

191 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Tuesday 12 September 1854, p.2.

192 *The Empire*, Saturday 10 November 1852, p.2.

193 'Original Correspondence', *Bathurst Free Press and Mining Journal*, Saturday 12 August 1854, p.2, quoted in Juanita Kwok, *The Chinese in Bathurst: Recovering Forgotten Histories*, Doctoral thesis, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, 2018, p.71.

194 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 December 1854, p.4.

195 Select Committee, in NSW VPLC, 1854, Vol. 2, p.5 quoted in Juanita Kwok, *The Chinese in Bathurst: Recovering Forgotten Histories*, Doctoral thesis, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, 2018, p.75.

196 The text is to be found in SLNSW, Aw 43 Item 2, "Letter from F. Proeschal to Justice E. Wise".

197 Accompanying note to SLNSW: Aw 43/Item 2.

198 *Moreton Bay Courier*, 26 October 1850, p.3.

199 Authors translation with AI assistance. For an alternative translation see that by Ely Finch in "Bespattered with Chinese hieroglyphics" by Ely Finch and Michael Williams in *Sinophone Australia,* edited by Craig A. Smith, (forthcoming from Sydney University Press).

200 *Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 26 October 1850, p.3.

201 The use of the word 頭家 (towkay) for boss for example is a standard Hokkien or Southern Min usage.

202 Shirley Fitzgerald, *Red Tap Gold Scissors*, State Library of NSW Press, 1996, p.65.

203 *Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 26 October 1850, p.3. See also Margaret Slocomb, *Among Australia's pioneers: Chinese indentured pastoral workers on the Northern Frontier 1848 to c.1880* (Balboa press, 2014). *[Thanks to Tony Anderson for pointing out the connection in the research of Margaret Slocomb.]*

204 *Moreton Bay Free Press*, Tuesday 30 November 1852, p.1. Quoted in part in Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales, p.289.

Vignette VIII - Thomas Ashney

205 Marriage certificate of Thomas Ashney and Georgina Hallet, 1870/C/291. This information is courtesy of Leiza Hendricks.

206 Naturalization application of Thomas Ashney, Queensland State Archives, Item ID ITM1098197.

207 Gayndah rate book, Queensland State Archives, Item ID 1M275696.

208 *The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 18 April 1868, p.4.

209 *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Thursday, 12 June 1873, p.2.

210 *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Thursday 8 July 1875, p.2.

211 *The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 7 Sept 1878, p.7 & *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Thursday 30 September 1880, p.3.

212 *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Monday 9 July 1883, p.2.

213 *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Thursday 29 November 1883, p.2.

214 Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser, Wednesday 5 December 1883, p.2.

215 *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Wednesday 20 July 1887, p.4.

216 Williams, *Returning Home with Glory*, pp.74–75 refers to their *huaqiao* strategy. See also Steven B. Miles, *Chinese Diasporas: A Social History of Global Migration* (London: Routledge, 2020), pp.20–36.

217 *Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer*, Saturday 8 May 1852, p.4. Hokkien was only one of many Southern Min dialects of Fujian province but this was spoken in Amoy.

218 See Appendix for more on Chinese languages and dialects such as Hokkien.

219 *The Empire*, Friday 7 May 1852, p.2.

220 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 17 Apr 1852, p.2.

221 "Celestials" is derived from the Qing referring to themselves as 天朝上國, the Heavenly Court or Supreme Kingdom which was loosely translated Celestial Kingdom. By the mid-19th century, it was used patronisingly in the colonies.

222 *Bathurst Free Press*, Saturday 10 November 1849, p.3, quoted in Juanita Kwok, *The Chinese in Bathurst: Recovering Forgotten Histories*, Doctoral thesis, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, 2018, p.40.

223 *Bathurst Free Press*, Saturday 10 November 1849, p.3.

224 For an account of lack of individuality granted market gardeners see Michael Williams, 'Vegetables varied and excellent, chiefly from a Celestial garden', *History*, September, 2022, pp.9-11.

225 *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, Saturday 10 January 1857, p.2, mentions the "rival factions of Canton and Amoy". J. Dundas Crawford, 'Notes by Mr. Crawford on Chinese Immigration in the Australian Colonies', September 1877, *Great Britain Foreign Office Confidential Prints*, F.O. 3742, p.8, refers to feuds "between Cantonese and Fuhkeen [Fujian]" men".

226 See Sophie Loy-Wilson, Coolie Alibis: Seizing Gold from Chinese Miners in New South Wales, *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 2017, Vol.91, pp.28-45.

227 See Vignettes IV & XV.

228 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Friday 27 August 1852, p.3.

229 Kwok, Juanita, *The Chinese in Bathurst: Recovering Forgotten Histories*, Doctoral thesis, Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, 2018, p.59.

230 Margaret Slocomb, *Among Australia's pioneers: Chinese indentured pastoral workers on the Northern Frontier 1848 to c.1880*, Bloomington, Balboa press, 2014, p.xv.

231 Gold Fields Management Act 1852.

232 *The Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser*, Saturday 25 December 1852, p.2.

233 *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer*, Saturday 9 July 1853, p.2.

234 The NSW Naturalisation database identifies less than 40 as Amoy men, while that of Queensland even less. Name searchers reveal many more.

235 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Wednesday 18 October 1854, p.2.

236 The author is grateful to Allison Leathart for bringing this hitherto unknown source to his attention.

237 State Archives NSW: Col Sec 60/1130 (located in Col Sec 60/1311) & Col Sec 64/1255.

238 John Chay for example, see Vignette VII.

239 State Archives NSW: Col Sec 64/1255; 61/3880; 60/3416; 60/1130 (located in Col Sec 60/1311).

240 See for example Vignette X: Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich.

241 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Thursday 27 July 1854, p.5.

242 *The Empire*, Monday 17 August 1857, p.5.

243 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Thursday 22 December 1859, p.2.

244 *Warwick Examiner and Times*, Saturday 10 December 1870, p.2.

245 *Warwick Examiner and Times*, Saturday 16 August 1873, p.2.

246 *The Courier*, Friday 26 July 1861, p.4.

247 *Maryborough Chronicle, Wide Bay and Burnett Advertiser*, Thursday 15 August 1861, p.2.

248 *The Queensland Guardian*, Wednesday 20 November 1861, p.2. For more on James Chiam see Howard Le Couteur, "Chinese engagement with colonial Queensland society: James (Con) Chiam of Maryborough, and Thomas Ashney of Gayndah", *Queensland History Journal*, Volume 25, No. 4, February 2023, pp.315-325.

249 Queensland State Archives, Item ID ITM7901, Briefs and transcripts of depositions, Tien Bien, 10 November 1859.

250 See, Soon Keong Ong, *Coming Home to a Foreign Country: Xiamen and Returned Overseas Chinese, 1843-1938*, Cornell University Press, 2021.

251 See various examples in the Vignettes for a by no means exhaustive snapshot.

252 It is interesting to note that Syme when discussing the possibility of shipping people on contracts to NSW in 1846 specifically mentions "a free passage back" should they "wish to return". Though this condition

doesn't seem to be mentioned again afterwards. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Tuesday 23 March 1847, p.3.

253 *Moreton Bay Courier*, Wednesday 10 February 1858, p.2.

254 *Overland China Mail*, 15 February 1856, p.1. This was widely repeated in the Australian press associated with a warning that more Chinese would be encouraged to come as a result of these successful returns (two more successful Cantonese groups are also mentioned), see for example, *The Age*, Monday 28 April 1856, p.3.

255 *The Empire*, Monday 17 August 1857, p.5.

256 Darnell, The Chinese labour trade to New South Wales, p.272.

257 For this well documented history see Williams, *Returning Home with Glory*, Mavis Gock Yen, *South Flows the Pearl*, Sydney University Press, 2022, and Denis Byrne (Ed), *Heritage and History in the China-Australia Migration Corridor*, HKU Press, 2023.

258 See Williams, *Returning Home with Glory*, p.48.

Vignette IX - Tom (Thomas) Gam

259 Thanks to Helene Shepherd, a descendent to Tom Gam for this information.

260 *Gosford Times and Gosford and Wollombi Express*, Friday 13 April 1906, p.5.

261 *Gosford Times and Gosford and Wollombi Express*, Friday 13 April 1906, p.5.

7. Myths and legacies

262 While usually described as 'Cantonese' speakers by no means all spoke that language. See Appendix.

263 *The Queenslander*, 20 May 1876, p.16. *Mackay Mercury and South Kennedy Advertiser*, Saturday 10 June 1876, p.3.

264 *The Port Denison Times and Kennedy District Advertiser*, Wednesday 11 April 1866, p.2.

265 *Rockhampton Bulletin*,16 September 1874, p.2. Pay is now 7 dollars a month and 50 dollars for a return fare.

266 *Gympie Times and Mary River Mining Gazette*, 8 May 1875, p.4 & *The Capricornian*, 4 September 1875, p.563.

267 Jan Richardson, 'Tim Tie (1856 – 1886)', Harry Gentle Resource Centre, Griffith University, 2022.

268 *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, Saturday 13 March 1886, p.4 & *Globe*, Tuesday 6 April 1886, p.8.

Vignette X - Benevolent Asylum, Dunwich

269 For details of its history see Queensland Heritage Register, Dunwich Benevolent Asylum. At least 40 Amoy men can be identified in the *Register of personal details relating to persons admitted to Dunwich Benevolent Asylum (Males)*, QLD State Archives, PR 9518.

270 This information is from the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum records on Find a Grave. The records have been placed here as the 8,000 or more burials at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum are all unmarked. The anonymous recorder on Find A Grave is to be commended for their efforts.

7. cont... Memorial

271 See above note 167.

272 See John Fitzgerald "China's 'Century of Humiliation' and Chinese-Australian History", *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, 2019, pp.230–235.

273 Memorial to the Amoy Shepherds booklet, *passim*.

274 See the many Vignettes above. That of the Benevolent Asylum (Vignette X) does reflect the memorials perspective, but there is so much more to the history of the men from Amoy.

275 See John Fitzgerald "China's 'Century of Humiliation' and Chinese-Australian History", *Chinese Southern Diaspora Studies*, 2019, pp.230–235.

Vignette XII - John Kim

276 *The Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, Thursday 8 September 1859, p.2.

277 Queensland Naturalisations Register, ITM841187, John Kim, 1861.

278 *The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 6 May 1922, p.17.

279 *The Brisbane Courier*, Saturday 13 May 1922, p.16 & *The Brisbane Courier*, Tuesday 2 Jan 1866, p.4.

280 *Queensland Times, Ipswich Herald and General Advertiser*, Saturday 3 September 1864, p.3.

281 *Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser*, Saturday 23 Feb 1867, p.2 ; Saturday 20 June 1868, p.2 & Saturday 3 July 1869, p.3.

282 *The Brisbane Courier*, Thursday 5 May 1870, p.3.

283 *Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser*, Saturday 13 April 1872, p.2.

284 *Dalby Herald and Western Queensland Advertiser*, Saturday 6 April 1872, p.2; Saturday 26 Oct 1872, p.2 ; Saturday 7 December 1872, p.3 & Saturday 17 July 1875, p.2.

285 Find A Grave, John Kim, Dunwich Benevolent Asylum.

286 *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, Wednesday 11 November 1891, p.2.

Vignette XIII - Naturalizations

287 Applications rather than grants of naturalization because the Governor of the Colony of NSW (then including what is now southern Queensland) took it upon himself to pause all grants of naturalizations to people of Chinese origin as the NSW Parliament was debating possible restrictions in this period. Such restrictions were imposed from 1861 until 1867. Thanks to Allison Leathart for uncovering this previously unknown source.

288 State Archives NSW: Col Sec 59/955 (located in Col Sec 60/1311).

289 State Archives NSW: Col Sec 60/1130 (located in Col Sec 60/1311).

290 State Archives NSW: Col Sec 59/5665 (can be found in Col Sec 60/1311).

Vignette XIV - William Beacham

291 State Archives NSW: Col Sec 61/3880.

292 Juanita Kwok, The Forgotten histories of the Chinese in Bathurst.

293 *National Advocate*, Friday 5 March 1909, p.2.

Vignette XV - William Kongce Cooey

294 *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 15 November 1851, p.2.

295 Oath of Naturalization, No. 950, William Kongce Cooey, 22 June 1863.

296 *The Toowoomba Chronicle and Queensland Advertiser*, Saturday 2 March 1872, p.3.

297 *The Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, Saturday 3 March 1866, p.3 & *The Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, Wednesday 29 March 1871, p.3.

298 *The Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, Wednesday 22 November 1871, p.3.

299 *The Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, Wednesday 10 January 1872, p.2.

300 Death Certificate 1889/001547: Sarah Cooey, 10 March 1889; *The Darling Downs Gazette and General Advertiser*, Wednesday 6 April 1870, p.3 & *The Moreton Bay Courier*, Saturday 2 June 1860, p.3.

301 *The Telegraph*, Monday 22 July 1912, p.4.

302 Death certificate No.5228787, William Covey (sic), 26 August 1902. His parents are listed as Gou Ah and Gou See.

303 Certificate of Marriage 647: Annie Elizabeth Cooey and Ah Tai, 28 October 1889 & Certificate of Marriage 646: Annie Elizabeth Low Ginn and Chow Mew Gow, 28 November 1895.

304 Certificate of Marriage 9045: Annie Lowe (sic) and John McNamee, 12 July 1910.

305 Thanks are due to Renee Buckley, descendent, for supplying most of the information found here.